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ATOPOLOGIES OF DERRIDA
Philosophy, Law and Literature

Academic dissertation to be publicly discussed,
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University of Helsinki, in lecture room 5,
on the 16th of June, 2000, at 12 o'clock

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The Department of Philosophy, University of Helsinki
PL 24 8 Unioninkatu 40 B), 00014 HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO

ISBN 951-45-9414-2 (nid.)
ISSN 0357-4172
Vantaa 2000
Tummavuoren Kirjapaino Oy

ISBN 952-91-2326-4 (PDF)

Atopologies of Derrida. Philosophy, Law and Literature.

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Abstract

This dissertation consists of four articles and a summary. They interpret the work of Jacques Derrida in two ways: first, as a questioning of several central notions of philosophy, for example origins, death, writing, the ethical and justice; and second, as an attempt to show how Derrida puts these notions to work in literature and law.

It is argued that Derrida starts from the phenomenological tradition and not from the structuralistic notion of science, developing his critique of philosophy by thinking and rethinking the work of Heidegger. The questions of ethics do not spring from his recent work; they function as a background in his early deconstructions of Husserl.

The notion of origin is considered in a double sense: as a deconstructed possibility of a non-origin and as something that guides philosophical questioning. An origin becomes more like a topological term than the topicality of the notion of topos itself, while the possibility of a non-origin becomes an atopic notion of difference and spacing. Here the notion of temporality is considered in the form of spatiality – the temporal differing of an origin also becomes a possibility of atopics.

The notions of law and difference are considered in the horizon of undecidability and undeconstructability. The question of literature is posed as a question of space and as the temporal mode of becoming and promising. The interpretation of some “topoi” of deconstruction attempts to show that there is no centrality in the work of Jacques Derrida – this means more ‘topoi’ as relationality than just a *Weg*, as a rupture out of the way of thought that could be better described as “atopoi”.

Acknowledgements

I started to write these articles as a researcher and part-time teacher in the Department of Comparative Literature. Half the articles were initially not written for a dissertation but out of an interest in the work of Jacques Derrida and as a commentary on the ongoing discussion about deconstruction.

I wish to thank my supervisor Esa Saarinen for encouraging me to continue the study of Derrida and deconstruction, although it is not a topic that is much studied in Finland. I should also like to express my gratitude to Päivi Huuhtanen-Somero for her encouragement as the supervisor and examiner of my master's thesis. She was the first to see the importance of the theoricity of deconstruction. I gratefully acknowledge Leena Kirstinä, who advised me to concentrate on phenomenology. I also thank Leila Haaparanta for supervising my licentiate thesis and professor Ilkka Niiniluoto for suggesting that the nature of Derrida's work was suitable for a dissertation by publication. My deep gratitude is also due to Simon Critchley (Essex) and to Hans Ruin (Stockholm) whose pre-examination reports were very encouraging and helpful in giving the direction for the final form of the thesis.

I would like to extend my thanks to Ari Hirvonen for giving me the opportunity to present the paper "Who Comes after the Deconstruction of Law" in the *Polycentric Law: Fragments* seminar in Helsinki and for editing it. I gratefully acknowledge Markku Lehtinen for giving me the opportunity to speak in the Lectures on Phenomenological Aesthetics, "Death as a Limit of Phenomenology", and for commenting on both the Finnish and the English versions of the article. I am also indebted to assistant professor Dan Zahavi in the Nordic Doctoral School of Philosophy in Copenhagen. I would like to extend my appreciation to Juha Himanka for his generous help with the *connaissance* of the works of Husserl. I must also express my gratitude to A-M. Tymieniecka for her comments in the seminar of The World Society of Phenomenology and Advanced Phenomenological Learning in Poland, *Phenomenology of Life*, where

another part of the paper was presented. I thank Sami, Markku and Miika for their great assistance with different versions of "Law without Place". My thanks to the editor of *Law and Critique*, Dr. Anton Schütz (Birkbeck College, University of London), for his great help and encouraging letters, and many thanks to professor Hannu Riikonen for asking me to present the paper and professor Arne Mellberg of Oslo University for his comments. I wish to thank the former *Derrida circle of Helsinki* for giving me an opportunity to present some ideas about Derrida's earlier work. Special thanks are reserved for Hannu Sivenius, who has supported me with a lot of photocopies of phenomenological journals and invaluable advice, and also to Susanna Lindberg and Jussi Himanka for their generous comments on the subjects of rigorous phenomenology, childhood, and Derrida. I wish to thank professor John Sallis (Pennsylvania State) for giving a seminar about *Khôra*, and for comments on the first chapter of the present summary. I express my gratitude to Professor Hugh J. Silverman from Stony Brook for suggesting the current title of the work. I am also indebted to Dr. Roderick McConchie for the language revision of this publication. My thanks to Jyrki Lehtola and Erkki Jäppinen for helping me with the summary at the final stage.

I have profited most from discussion among *The Lacan Circle of Helsinki* (Est. 1988) and my sincere appreciation goes to the *Heidegger Circle of Helsinki* (1990–1996), *The Hegel Circle of Helsinki* (1993–1996) and *The Aristotle Circle of Helsinki* (Est. 1997). I thank them collectively.

I have been supported by grants from The Niilo Helander Foundation, Oskar Öflund's Foundation and the Rector of the University of Helsinki. Financial assistance has also been provided by The Councillor of University, The Hans Brummers Foundation, The Society of Professors Wives', The Central Association of the Visually Impaired, and The Society of the Friends of the Blind. The research was also supported by my mother Terttu, who has also tried to correct the language of these articles.

List of Publications

1. "The Quest for Origin. From Husserl's Phenomenological Archaeology to the Deconstruction of Archē", pp. 49–94, *Reports from the Department of Philosophy*. No. 2. Helsinki: University of Helsinki 2000.
2. "Death as a Limit of Phenomenology. The Notion of Death From Husserl to Derrida.", pp. XX–XX, *Analecta Husserliana*. Volume 66. *The Origins of Life – Book 1. The Primogenital Matrix of Life and its Context*. Edited by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka. Dordrecht: Kluwer 2000. (forthcoming, September 2000)
3. "Who Comes after the Deconstruction of Law?", pp. 176–191, *Polycentricity. The Multiple Scenes of Law*. Edited by Ari Hirvonen. London and Sterling, Virginia: Pluto Press 1998.
4. "Law without Place. Topology and Decision. Questions of Line and Literature", pp. 225–248, *Law and Critique*, Vol. IX, No. 2, 1998.

Summary: On Topos and Origins

This study is an attempt to interpret two aspects of Jacques Derrida's work, namely, the importance of his work both to phenomenological analysis and to the philosophy of law. It consists of four original publications and this summary. The summary provides the background for the proposed interpretation of Derrida, describes the methodology employed and gives a summary of the publications with some critical notes.

1. Thematisation and Philosophy

The German philosopher Eugen Fink gives an interpretation of Plato's concept of *khôra* in his book *Zur Ontologischen Frühgeschichte von Raum-Zeit-Bewegung* (1957).¹ Fink considers *khôra* as a limit, a dark chaotic concept of the metaphysics of light, the concept of the cosmological night of the World (*Weltnacht*). According to Fink, the chaos or undifferentiated (*ordnungslos*) world meant something positive before Plato. With Plato's philosophy, order (*Ordnung*) comes into the world and, with *tekhnē*, order also makes *khôra* a chaotic originary matter of the world. Fink explains that nature and the essence of humans were originally poetical: *tekhnēis poiēsis* in the sense of producing (*Her-Stellen*).²

Fink tries to give a prehistory or an origin (in a strong Heideggerian sense) for the concepts of space (*topos*), time (*khronos*) and movement (*kinēsis*). He considers that these philosophical concepts have their own history, their own movement, their own place and time in the history of Western metaphysics (the ontology of Being). He tries to give not merely an account of the ontological structure of

¹ See Fink 1957b, 181–183. He says about *khôra*: “Die Chora, die Ur-Materie des Weltalls, ist das CHAOS...” (at 187).

² *Ibid.*, 184–185.

the world (*materialische Ontologie*), but also the meaning of these terms before any constituted ontology. His last question is put in the metaphysical form: "*Proton Kinoun: Gott oder Welt?*"³ This refers to the constitution of the world and origins in the phenomenological sense.

For Fink the conceptual network of space, time and movement has always been operative in philosophy (or ontology). In the history of philosophy it has been something that is unthought of in philosophy, something that is both constitutive of philosophy and makes that constitution possible. It also involves the question of the given on the basis of the phenomenological intuition: what is the phenomenologically given (*Gegebenheit*)?

In his famous lecture *Operative Concepts in Husserl's Phenomenology* (1957) Fink establishes the distinction between the thematic concepts (themata in phenomenological consciousness) and operative concepts that are the schemata and the possibility of philosophy.⁴ He says:

But in the formation of thematic concepts, creative thinkers *use* other concepts and patterns of thought, they *operate* with intellectual schemata which they do not fix objectively. They think *through* certain cognitive presentations toward the basic concepts that are essentially their themes. Their understanding moves in a *conceptual field*, in a *conceptual medium* that they are not at all able to see. They expend intermediate lines of thought to set up that which they are thinking about. We call that which in this way is readily *expended* and *thought through* in philosophical thinking, but not *considered* in its own right, operative concepts.⁵

According to Fink the operative concepts are the shadows (*Ab-schattungen*) of thinking because the philosopher's knowledge is always finite and philosophy infinite.⁶ Thus, for Husserl the idea of phenomenology is an operative concept for phenomenology as the other main concepts of phenomenology, i.e. production and consti-

³ *Ibid.*, 233.

⁴ Fink 1957a 324/ET, 59.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, 336/69.

tution are.⁷ The idea of phenomenology thus could never be thematised in phenomenology.⁸ Rather than questioning the possibility of the phenomenological project, this has a positive value. This is inevitable because, as Fink believes, in the metaphorical language of light, shadow and knowledge, only a God can know without the *phainesthai* of shadows.⁹

It is well known that Jacques Derrida refers to this problem of thematisation and operative concepts in his first published interpretation of Husserl.¹⁰ In *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction* Derrida says:

That a phenomenological determination of the Idea itself may be radically impossible from then on signifies perhaps that phenomenology cannot be reflected in a phenomenology of phenomenology, and that its *Logos* can never appear as such, can never be given in a phenomenology of seeing, but (like all Speech) can only be heard or understood through the visible.¹¹

It almost seems as if Derrida is making a generalisation of Fink's finding. He questions the possibility of phenomenology's ability for self-reflection. Yet, this possibility rises from the process of a proper phenomenological thematisation which asks for the theme or idea of phenomenology. There always remains something unthinkable and hidden and unthought in the history of metaphysics. This unthought something could then be called the metaphysics of presence. However, the problem is not simply that something is operative or hidden in philosophy, but rather that it concerns the movement between the thematisation (in a Husserlian transcendental consciousness) and the operative shadows of philosophy that constitute/are constituted in the operative moments of philosophy.

Almost thirty years after Fink's interpretation of the concept of *khôra*, Jacques Derrida says the following about determining Plato's

⁷ *Ibid.*, 334/67.

⁸ Later he (Fink 1970) asks for example if death may be for Hegel (in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*) an operative concept.

⁹ Fink 1957a, 69/ET, 336: "Only God knows without shadows".

¹⁰ Derrida 1962/1974, 60 note 1; 155/ET, 69 note 66; 141.

¹¹ Derrida 1962/1974, 155/ET, 141.

khôra, about giving form to a form: “Elles consistent toujours à lui donner forme en la déterminant.”¹² What then is the giving of a form? Where is the form of forms, if the origin (or the essence) of form cannot be a form? Could it be something outside the form, beyond the form, or a formless form – a question of the non-*hylē*, matter beyond matter? All this would imply something like a *khôra* as a kind of operative concept or shadow beside philosophy. This formlessness could also be expressed in the language of Derrida’s *Of Grammatology*: “Differance is therefore the formation of form.”¹³

Is there any originary form – *Urform*, *hypermorphē* – which makes the distinction between *morphē/hylē* possible or is this also form-giving in the sense of formation, of *Bildung*, in both senses of the verb *Bilden*: as education and as formation? There is a giving of form to philosophy in which in this formative sense philosophy is autodidactic, as giving itself the highest of forms. If philosophy gives itself a form, it must be itself to itself, its own form: there is nothing outside philosophy that could determine the form of philosophy, since there is no form of the form of philosophy. One cannot give or formulate any rules for philosophy. The operative concept of the giving may be in giving up and in sending a form to the form as in the Derridean *donner/don*-discourse or in the Heideggerian *gabe/geben* discourse, where the task of thinking (*Aufgabe*) is also the giving up (*aufgeben*) of philosophy.¹⁴ This is a double sense or the double bind of the inside and the outside of philosophy.

Going back to the discourse on a non-place, *khôra*, can we then say, like Derrida, that *es gibt Khôra*, *il y a là khôra*, there is *khôra*: it is not there, *khôra* does not exist. Maybe *khôra* is what gives and sends, making giving and sharing possible, and not manifesting itself as a place for thinking – perhaps this non-place is the gift of the *khôra*, as Derrida argues.¹⁵ This also introduces a utopology, or atopologies, as we shall see later.

¹² Derrida 1987a, 269; referred to in Sallis 1994, 174.

¹³ Derrida 1967a, 92/ET, 63.

¹⁴ See Heidegger 1967.

¹⁵ Derrida 1987a, 270.

2. Where is a Topos?

The determination of topos or the non-naïve discussion about the spatiality of space may refer to Martin Heidegger, who has elaborated a topology of the history of Being, the topology of Being (*Topologie des Seyns*).¹⁶ One need not go into the details of Heidegger's topology but the notion of place (*Ortschaft*) begins to appear more and more often in the work of Heidegger after *Being and Time*.¹⁷ One of the first instances where Heidegger discusses this notion is *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, in which he questions the Platonic *khôra*. There Heidegger proposed the meaning of *Ort-Raum* for *khôra* and not simply the meaning of place or space, but also the meaning of spatiality. The original experience signifies "neither place nor space but what is occupied by what stands there".¹⁸ According to Heidegger this is where something "comes to being". There is a category of "wherein it becomes" (*gignethai*, *Werden: worin etwas wird*) and it is related to *physis* which means standing in the sense of arising (*paremfainô*).¹⁹ "To become" and *physis* are related to the notion of space (*khôra*), which is not a topos (*Ort*) but the notion of opening a space or place and spatiality (*Ort-Raum*). *Khôra* means both; it admits and "makes place" (*Platzmacht*).²⁰ *Khôra* cannot be the origin of space and we cannot ask what the origin of *khôra* is – if *khôra* is a non-existent place or no-place (*différance*; being of non-place) then we must also decide what *topos* or *utopos* is. John Sallis has noted that in the distinction between *khôra* and *topos* one could translate *topos* more as a *region* than the Aristotelian and later

¹⁶ According to Françoise Dastur (1994, 172–173, note 52) this expression (topologie) first occurs in *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens* (1947): "Aber das denkende Dichten ist in der Wahrheit die Topologie des Seyns". (Heidegger 1983, 84).

¹⁷ See for a recent discussion of Heidegger's topologies as "dystopies", "without a proper place", De Beistegui 1998, 5–7.

¹⁸ Heidegger 1987, 50/ET, 66.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 48–50/63–65.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 50–51/66.

determinations of *topos* as a place (*locus*).²¹ Here place also means a place or region of difference, of different relations, as a relation where the truth takes place.²²

In advance I shall try to discuss place, non-place and atopolis. Atopolis is to be understood as *khôra*, combining both space and place and letting them be, in the sense of the famous spatiality of the space. In the Derridean language this means “spacing”, “the articulation of space and time, the becoming-space of time and the becoming-time of space.”²³ The spatial concepts are interpreted as temporal and vice versa – the essence of time is not in itself temporal.

Thus, when speaking of “Atopolis of Derrida”, I mean both impossible place and spatiality, deconstructed and deferred/differing origins. In *Of Grammatology* topology means “the place of the origins”²⁴ and from the analysis of origins we know that it is always supplementary.²⁵ Atopolis also comes to mean something singular, an event like a circumcision, the circular movement of an in-scription that happens at once, both in the temporal and spatial

²¹ Sallis 1998, 407–408. It is noteworthy that he also starts to call Plato’s discussion of *Khôra* (in *Tim.* 52a–d) “chorology”.

²² See Heidegger’s *Aufenthalte* where a place does not just mean truth, but there is also a connotation of the taking place of the truth (*Ereignis*). Heidegger refers in *Aufenthalte* to Pindar, who names the island (*liebliche Insel*) of Aegina “alierkea khôran” or “das wogenzählende Eiland” (Heidegger 1993, 70–72). He also talks of the island as a *Heimat* (*Patran*) and refers to the Temple of Goddess *A-phaia* as an originary truth, *alēthēia*, *das Entbergende Verbergen*, the enigma of the truth. (*Aphaia*, *das Rätsel der Alēthēia*).

²³ Derrida 1967a, 92/ET 68. For the concept of spacing, see Pasanen 1992.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 318/ET 218. This is found in the subchapter “The Tournant of the Writing” [*Le tour d’écriture*: The Tournant/Trope/Trick of Writing, as Spivak notes] with the polarisations (*polein/polos*) of south and north, life and death, speaking and writing.

²⁵ *Ibid.*; see for example the chapters about “...that Dangerous Supplement...” and “From/of the Supplement to the Source”: The Theory of the Writing.”

sense of a turning.²⁶ Derrida is not engaging in a Heideggerian topology in the sense of a topology of Being, but it seems that the Heideggerian topology opens the way to the Derridean atopolology, which also has the sense of taking a different path or step from Heideggerian thinking, say, a step from Being to the notion of writing.²⁷ In *The Question of Being*, Heidegger points out that topology is always above the topography of nihilism because it situates (*Erörterung*) the place (*Ort*) of Being and Nothing (*Nichts*).²⁸ Topology thus has the meaning of gathering contradictions together. However, I do not understand Derridean atopolology as referring to a kind of history (*Geschichte*) of Being as a destiny or teleology (*Geschick*) for all sending(s) of the Being. Nor do I believe that Derrida is allowing a place here for a Levinasian “absolute Other”. I would suggest that here the Other is more neutral, or quasi-transcendental.

According to Liddell-Scott’s *Greek-English Lexicon*,²⁹ the Greek word *atopos* has at least three meanings: 1) out of space, out of the way; also strange, marvelous, odd, and thus the secondary meanings of 2) absurd (lat. *ineptus*) 3) unnatural, disgusting. The meaning of “out of space” or “out of the way” is the preferred meaning here, but one cannot exclude the connotations of estrangement and “exorbitant” in the work of Derrida.³⁰ *Atopos* is a more neutral expression than the more distant connotations of “absurd” or “unnatural” that

²⁶ Cf. Derrida 1986 and 1991.

²⁷ The possibility of topology in *Of Grammatology* refers to *Zur Seinsfrage* (1955), where Heidegger clarifies the notion of topology. There Being is for Heidegger the famous chiasmatically crossed out Being, with the reference to the manifoldness of the concept of the line (Heidegger 1978, 406). For Derrida (Derrida 1967a 30–38/ET, 18–24) the notions of *différance* and writing are in relation to Being and the possibility of the erasure of the ontico-ontological difference, which begins by the “trick (*tour*) of writing” (at 38/24).

²⁸ Heidegger *ibid.*

²⁹ Liddell-Scott 1983.

³⁰ For example, Siscar recently has brought up the question of the monstrosity of Derrida’s books and “the strange performativity” of his writing (Siscar 1998, 274–280).

also derive from the privative (*a-*) character of the word *topos*. The manifestation of Being itself may be privative, not simply considered as a lack of Being as in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*,³¹ but as something that belongs to the characterisation of Being if we follow the Heideggerian determination of truth as *a-lethē*, as Heidegger points out in the discussion about the privative, *sterēsis*, in relation to the truth (*Unverborgenheit*).³² A-topologies are not in direct relation to truth as an unconcealment or, alternatively, atopologies could be expressed as a relation without a relation, a relation through privation.³³

A *topos*, in turn, is not simply a textual place, a topic, or a theme; the *topos* for topology (or an *analysis situs*, a place or *topos*) is used here in a double sense: first, as a topology, and second, as a discourse (*logos*) about a topology. It is possible that this may lead to an atopology, a utopical place. The reason for speaking of it in this way is that the language of origins is insufficient to describe the movements of deconstruction. For deconstruction one cannot find a simple origin or a centre. Even though there is no center – the absence of such a centre is not a centre – one must also affirm the impossibility and the non-origin, the heterogeneity and doubleness, of the origins. Atopology also signifies here a turn, in the sense of *tropos*, towards impossibility.

As mentioned above, *topos* does not mean here a place for argumentation or the classical definition of *topoi* as a reserve, as E.R. Curtius says in his *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*: "In the antique system of rhetoric topics is a stockroom. There one found ideas of the most general sort."³⁴ This notion of *topoi* derives from Aristotle's *Topics*, often understood as dialectics or the method of correct argument. Furthermore, one could take into consideration

³¹ About the many uses of *sterēsis* in Aristotle see *Met.* 1019b15–20, 1022b22–1023a7 and 1046a28–35.

³² Heidegger 1978, 292–299.

³³ There are, for example, other "etymologies" or possibilities for the proper names of non-places. See Marin (1973, 115–131) for *eutopie* and *ou-topie* in Thomas More, that "deconstruct" Utopia, because the names do not signify properly (at 211–212).

³⁴ Curtius 1963, 79.

the relation between Aristotelian ontology (i.e. metaphysics) and dialectics.³⁵ Aristotle does not determine very clearly what a *topos* is and it is not surprising that it has different meanings for him. For example, in his *Rhetoric* there is a distinction between general places (*topoi koinoi*) and proper places (*topoi idioi, eidos*) – this means that, in *Rhetoric*, *topos* means a proper place in one sense while in another sense it does not because Aristotle makes a distinction between *eidos* and *topos*.³⁶ In his *Topica*, a *topos* can mean also a principle (*arkhē*) or premise for many arguments,³⁷ and in its foundation, *topos* is a law in a dialectical and not formal sense.³⁸ Yet this Aristotelian vocabulary does not posit a clear contrast to a “post-modern” or textual definition of a *topos*, as a Heideggerian openness, a disclosure.³⁹

A *topos* is a discursive space. It has features derived from geography and features derived from rhetoric. Yet it occupies a domain of its own, for discursive spaces are at the same time delimited by texts and opened up by text. A topology – interpretation of *topoi* – maps out discursive spaces as they constitute texts and as they distinguish themselves from another.⁴⁰

Understood as a problem of textuality, from here on “textual infrastructures” are described as a *topos*, as a question of a limit. One could also call them *topoi* in the classical sense and give a list of them: chiasmus, death, law, difference, origins as well as bond, metaphor, dissemination, promise, performativity and the apophantic. One can also ask where the difference or the singularity of these places is: how should one describe a singular topology that questions the universal and at the same time sets aside the particu-

³⁵ See for example Aubenque 1963, 251–302, who devotes a whole chapter to this problem.

³⁶ This is an interpretation of De Pater (1968, 178–179); see Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1358 a 10–35, which refers to *Topics*. On “commonplaces” see *Top.* B. 3. 111a 10–14 and 111b 8–12.

³⁷ De Pater 1968, 177, the reference is to *Top.* 163b 32–33.

³⁸ De Pater *ibid.*, 180.

³⁹ Silverman 1994, 3.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* See also textual *topos* as a domain, a space and a topic (125), a rhetorical topic (135) and *atopia* (132–133) in Barthesian sense.

larities? I thus prefer the expression atopology even though it does not mean to make logic out of *logos*.

3. The Quest for Deconstruction

It could be said that deconstruction – or the deconstructive method – proceeds “classically” in three steps. (A) First, it produces binary opposition, which, however, is not to be conceived as an empirical phenomenon. Strictly speaking, such pairs should not be taken out of their context: the most famous example is Derrida’s opposition between “good” speech and “bad” writing. Then, in the second step (B) the binary pair is reversed, but this is not yet enough (“good” writing). The third step is that (C) the suppressed pair of the opposition is re-defined in an enlarged or contradictory mode (the Derridean *écriture* or arche-writing) – this does not lead to a synthesis of the preceding moments. (1.) This third step leads to a space that can be called *inscription*. As an operation it leads also to the opening of a new space, the space of writing which does not belong to the classical linear mode of writing, spatially or temporally. (2.) This can be called *dissemination*. These two operations seem to describe what actually happens in Derrida’s work and they seem to cut down Richard Rorty’s argument about the two Derridas, old and new, or the professional and literary ironist.⁴¹ One can even defend such a distinction between two operations, between inscription and dissemination, in the writings of Derrida, and also argue that these operations have a chiasmatic relation, opening each other, and that temporally the last one precedes the first.

Yet there are some obvious problems – why use such an operation, why “deconstruct Western metaphysics”? This leads to ethico-political questions about the necessity of deconstruction. The ethical in Derrida’s work means that the procedures of deconstruction are not simply a formal or a mechanical operation.⁴² Recent studies on Derrida⁴³ successfully show that his work contains

⁴¹ Rorty 1996, 16–17.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Beardsworth 1996, Patrick 1997.

different political aspects or even some kind of ethics.⁴⁴ Rather than a defence of Derrida as a political thinker, we have here a suspicion that there is already “a thinking of the political” functioning in the background of deconstruction. However, this is also in opposition to Peter Dews, who makes a distinction between Derrida’s earlier semiotical formalism and the current phase of self-reflexive and ethical “undeconstructability”.⁴⁵ It could be argued that the reason for deconstruction, or the deconstruction of Western metaphysics, is neither formal nor structuralistic. Deconstruction does not simply mean the genealogical questioning but asks why one should broach the distinctions between aesthetic/political in the guise of formalism/ethics.

This could also be formulated as a movement in language and one should give more emphasis to the stylistics of deconstruction, to the proximity – if this is the right word – of the style and the argument. It is impossible to say exactly where this stylistics (or the movement of dissemination) begins – even if it could be determined as an undermining of pairs such as high and low⁴⁶ or the science of old and new names.⁴⁷

Derrida’s work can also be situated in the essayistic tradition.⁴⁸ Alternatively one can analyse the (rhetorical) tone of the work⁴⁹ or stylistics,⁵⁰ or even a certain relation to autobiography.⁵¹ Of course, one cannot distinguish the styles of Derrida’s philosophy in the formalistic sense. I argue it is useful to explain the reasons for such a difference in styles first because it is easy to reduce Derrida to “dry formalism of word plays and aporias”.

The four articles deal with several aspects of Derrida’s work and can also be read as comprising two sections, where the first

⁴⁴ See Cornell 1992 and Critchley 1992.

⁴⁵ Dews 1995, 6–8.

⁴⁶ Johnson 1993.

⁴⁷ Hobson 1998.

⁴⁸ See Korhonen 1998, 247–274.

⁴⁹ See Siscar 1998. Siscar rightly points out the decision about philosophy’s tone; and also to the question of “the changing of the tone”.

⁵⁰ See Steinmetz 1994.

⁵¹ Smith 1995.

leads to the problems of the latter. The first section – let us call it phenomenological – starts from an interpretation of Husserl that tries to show that Derrida is a phenomenologist and continues phenomenological research. This means interpreting Derrida's arguments as more phenomenological than they apparently seem. Derrida prefigures some recent interpretations of Husserl – interpretations that, moreover, are more favorable to Husserl than Heidegger. The first article [1.] focuses on the notion of genesis and on a notion of origins which may be a kind of topos. It is also an interpretation of Derrida's early *Le problème de la genèse dans la philosophie de Husserl* which begins from the problem that concerns the opening between structure and origin.⁵² The second article [2.] tries to situate the impossibility of death from a point of view beyond the phenomenological perspective and also clearly prefers the horizon of the other's death before "my authentic death". It concerns Derrida's *Speech and Phenomena*⁵³ but the whole argument is based more on Derrida's recent book, *Aporias*,⁵⁴ which discusses the function of death and thanatology in philosophy. Article [2.] is concerned more with the questioning of the temporalised origin as difference than with the meaning of a deconstructed origin understood as differing/deferring in the spatial sense.

The second section is an interpretation of Derrida's writings about law, mainly of *Force of Law*.⁵⁵ It develops a kind of Derridean toponomology, an intersection of topology and nomology. The third article [3.] focuses on Derrida's interpretation of undeconstructability and the question of law and justice. It is read in the context of recent deconstructive legal studies that are based on Derrida's interpretation of Walter Benjamin's *Zur Kritik der Gewalt*.⁵⁶ The fourth article [4.] describes the movement of undeconstructability and questions of the moments of decision and undecidability in relation to Carl Schmitt and Paul Celan. The Derridean notion of

⁵² Derrida 1990.

⁵³ Derrida 1967c.

⁵⁴ Derrida 1994a.

⁵⁵ Derrida 1994b.

⁵⁶ Benjamin 1977.

literature is also reread in the context of Maurice Blanchot. The article argues that *Politics of Friendship*⁵⁷ could be read as a questioning of the political space that seems to be a development of a Blanchotian “space of literature” or space of death. Both [3.] and [4.] try to open Derrida’s work to the space of literature understood as a space of becoming, as a space of politics, or as a space of ethics, as expressed at the end of [2.]. The place and placing is here more important than temporality because the question of ethics is connected to what is taking place, what or where a place is determined.

The concern for phenomenology is methodological and is a question of phenomenology’s scope and limits – not of phenomenological reduction, which is to be understood more as transcendental-phenomenological reduction rather than a reduction to the eidetic moments or the Cartesian way of reduction. Many problems relating to death and birth and intersubjectivity seem to be excluded from the inner life of the consciousness in a strange way. The focus is on phenomenology’s, or philosophy’s, urge to always go back to the origins, but there is also the necessity of going through transcendental questions. For example, if phenomenology cannot give an adequate answer to the question concerning different modes of writing, one must also try to give a sense of writing which is beyond the horizon of phenomenology.

In these articles I focus on certain questions systematically. My emphasis is on the anglophonic reception of Derrida’s work, or the so-called “Derrida studies”.⁵⁸ The commentary is centred around Derrida’s work on the continental problems of philosophy as well as the phenomenological interpretation of Derrida.⁵⁹ The Derridean

⁵⁷ Derrida 1994c.

⁵⁸ I mention here the studies by Llewelyn 1985, Staten 1985, Harvey 1987, Wood 1988, Gasché 1986; 1994, Norris 1987, Caputo 1987, Carroll 1989, Persecepe 1989, Boyne 1990, Pasanen 1992 and Critchley 1992 which have tried to read Derrida mostly in phenomenological and (post-)structuralistic contexts; then see Behler 1988, Rapaport 1989, Clark 1992 and Petrosino 1994, which underline the Heideggerian context in the work of Derrida.

⁵⁹ See Bennington 1991, Costa 1996, Steinmetz 1994, Giovannangeli 1979 and 1994, Ferraris 1992 and Zima 1994 for commentaries on Derrida. See also Steinbock 1995 and Zahavi 1995 for phenomenological analysis.

concept of writing is not considered here because many excellent studies on the subject already exist.⁶⁰ This is the reason why it is more interesting to explicate how, after the deconstruction of the so-called "philosophy of presence" (deconstruction as inscription), one must seek different modes of writing (deconstruction as dissemination). In the articles this is articulated as a question of literature and of a literary space – whose structure may be the structure of a promise, as in the phrase "democracy's becoming". It can be said that the classical deconstructions of Husserl, Heidegger, Foucault, Saussure, and Lévi-Strauss are so-called "inscriptions" and that in Derrida's writings on Mallarmé and Sollers the disseminative force of deconstruction is put forward.⁶¹ I emphasise the shift in Derrida's mode of writing.⁶² The structure of my interpretations is to look back to the well-known works of the 60s in the light of his work from the late eighties or nineties. Works like *Glas*,⁶³ *La carte postale*⁶⁴ and *La vérité en peinture*⁶⁵ are rarely treated except in certain famous articles, for example, in his Lacan article *La facteur de la vérité*⁶⁶ or the part of *La vérité en peinture*⁶⁷ which deals with Heidegger's *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*.⁶⁸

I have also tried to distance myself from analytical interpretations of phenomenology. The principal question in such interpretations involves the interpretation of Husserl in the context of possible-world semantics, so that the question of the concept of different

⁶⁰ See discussion of Derrida's work as a theory of writing or as a theory of signs, the text or grammatology in Bennington 1991, Carlshamre 1987, Englert 1987, Felka 1991, Greisch 1977, Hottois 1979, Menke-Eggers 1988 and Thiel 1990.

⁶¹ Derrida 1972a.

⁶² Derrida could also be seen in the context of *Tel Quel's* "theory of writing" (Ffrench 1995). For a sociological analysis of *Tel Quel* and Derrida see Kauppi (1990).

⁶³ Derrida 1974/1981.

⁶⁴ Derrida 1978.

⁶⁵ Derrida 1980.

⁶⁶ In Derrida 1980.

⁶⁷ Derrida 1978.

⁶⁸ Heidegger 1980.

worlds, the world as *Weltanschauung* or the world in general would not be brought into question.⁶⁹ I defend the position that it is irrelevant to explain Derrida's interpretation of Husserl as a misconceived theory of reference or semantics. The well-known argument against Derrida (as a relativist) is that if there is no fixed reference, then there is no reference at all – everything is a wild play of differences. This is based on an instrumentalistic and nihilistic interpretation of language, which completely ignores the fact that the Derridean notion of reference means that there is always a determinate meaning in a specific context. This also necessarily leads to the affirmation of the pragmatic level of language in addition to the syntactic and semantic levels and to the impossibility of determining meanings on those levels.

As for topologies, *topoi*, understood as relationalities, the reference is to such concepts as temporality, promise, moment of vision, an event of appropriation, undecidability, death, Jewishness, and origins. The deconstruction of the origin is thus close to the meaning of atopolgy. The name "Atopologies of Derrida" means here "the deconstruction of the origin" in a presupposed "metaphysics of presence". In addition, this means to acknowledge the two-sidedness of the onto-theology in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and not to affirm that we must leave all the bad metaphysics behind. I argue that it is hazardous to put Derrida's work into practice, because this practice (i.e. deconstructing) is in danger of simply repeating certain oppositions technically and turning them around.⁷⁰ Deconstruction is understood (or sometimes "grammatology") as such rigorous and powerful a science that it should only be practised when really aporetic structures exist – for example, the dialectical solution to phenomenological oppositions between empirical-transcendental and the world/the ego. These oppositions should be questioned on the transcendental level, on the so-called "quasi-transcendental"

⁶⁹ Smith-McIntyre 1982, Mohanty 1985 and Hintikka 1975. The classical question: are there impossible worlds – or is there any constituting difference between possibilities and non-possibilities.

⁷⁰ See Ulmer 1985, Mason 1990, Royle 1995 and Brannigan, Robbins and Wolfreys 1996 for applications. etc.

level or in the “quasi-phenomenological” manner. The meaning of the expression “quasi-” should not simply be interpreted as inauthenticity. This means admitting the subsistence of a proper transcendental and pure phenomenology, but it also means understanding them as undoing the relation “between” in the sense of “almost” or “as if”, as the latinized senses of the word “quasi” suggest (fr. *presque*). The principal aim is to attain the limits of language of nearness and distance, or high and low, where these oppositions are undermined.

4. Updating Death, Politics and Ethics

Since this introduction offers the opportunity to provide a self-critical account, I must take the opportunity to make some critical remarks about how the author’s views have changed and how the research should have been carried out. This is more important since some of the articles presented were not originally written with a thesis in mind and I have not been able to develop them, except [1.]. For instance, [2.] was written in a form that does not develop its theme in a very original way, as is done in Simon Critchley’s work.⁷¹ After these self-critical remarks I try to comment on minor difficulties here, before explaining the methodology in detail. This also means that reference is to Derrida’s recent publications in a very general way, since he has published nearly twenty books during the last decade.

First, the problem of death in Derrida’s work was not examined as it should be, as a relation between what Levinas and Heidegger have said about the subject. One should begin from Derrida’s thesis that giving death is impossible, it is impossible to die for the other, to die instead of the other.⁷² The continuity concerning Derrida’s speculations about death should culminate with his interpretation in *Apories*⁷³ about the famous chapter of *Bevorstehen* (impedance) in

⁷¹ See Critchley 1997. One should also mention Dastur (1994) for the idea that death is outside phenomenology.

⁷² Derrida 1992a, 37–55.

⁷³ Derrida 1994a.

Being and Time. There Heidegger claims that *Dasein* stands before itself, in relation to its ownmost possibilities.⁷⁴ This also has something to do with the opening movement of temporalisation: it is death which opens temporality for Heidegger and not vice versa.

Levinas seems to subscribe to the Heideggerian analysis of the temporality and openness of *Dasein* to death in his work from *Le temps et le autre* to *Dieu, la mort et le temps*.⁷⁵ There death opens up the possibility of impossibility in Heidegger.⁷⁶ Of course, the death of others occurs only in a secondary sense in Heidegger as a possibility of *Mitsein* – it could be shown that even Husserl writes more about the death of the other, as explained in [2.]. This is the tension between Levinas and Heidegger. In my account the notion of subjective-solipsistic death remains in Heidegger's work until the notion of the fourfold in the later Heidegger. In the fourfold mortals dwell on the earth in relation to the immortals and the sky.⁷⁷

In this respect, what occurs in Derrida's *Aporias* is a discussion about the notion of truth. *Dasein* stands in itself, before itself, in relation to its own authentic truth as a possibility of existing. In both *Aporias* and "Donner la mort"⁷⁸ Derrida is in opposition to a relatively late article by Emmanuel Levinas called "Mourir pour",⁷⁹ in which Levinas claims that the problem of "dying for" means only my authentic death.⁸⁰ Although Derrida is very sympathetic to Levinas's philosophy I argue that he opposes the Levinasian interpretation of the Heideggerian truth. The reason for this seems to be that for Levinas everything, even the event of appropriation (*Ereignis*), is reduced to Heidegger's thesis of mineness (*Jemeinigkeit*) that belongs to every existent *Dasein*.⁸¹ In *Being and Time* Heidegger discusses in a preparatory way mineness (*Jemeinigkeit*) of *Dasein* in

⁷⁴ See Derrida 1996/ET 1993. Heidegger 1927, § 50, 250.

⁷⁵ Levinas 1983 and 1993.

⁷⁶ Levinas 1983, 92 note 5.

⁷⁷ Heidegger 1967.

⁷⁸ Derrida 1992a.

⁷⁹ Levinas 1991, cf. Levinas 1993.

⁸⁰ Levinas 1991, 213ff. and 1993, 49–52. Heidegger 1927, § 47, 240. cf. Derrida 1991, 45–51.

⁸¹ Heidegger 1927, § 12, 53.

relation to authenticity and inauthenticity, but for Levinas this seems to be the last word on the subject.⁸² In his work Levinas often repeats the claim about the priority of mineness in Heidegger and it seems that Derrida, in *Aporias*, as in *Violence and Metaphysics*,⁸³ favours Heidegger for being more plurivocal in his philosophy than Levinas wants to interpret him.⁸⁴ The relation between *Dasein* and its call to itself (*Ruf*) could be interpreted against Levinasian intention; also against the possibility of dying for another instead of dying for oneself. Perhaps nobody has the last word on death, or as Derrida says in "*Être juste avec Freud*", death is the absolute master, after the master's death.⁸⁵ I believe that Derrida is right in pointing to the limits of anthro-thanatology, but, one must also ask, why Derrida still remains silent about Lacan, who was also a thinker on death and ethics.⁸⁶

In his recent work Derrida contrasts Maurice Blanchot's notion of dying and death to that of Levinas, where they are functioning like the infinite and the finite.⁸⁷ Blanchot obviously does not make such strong truth claims as Levinas. The "poetics" of Blanchot are more of the politics of an exile, meaning that language and poetry – against Heidegger – is not at home, there is no absolute homecoming as there is no absolute exile.

We have not yet asked what Derrida's account of the other would be, specifically in relation to Levinas. Derrida questions the relation of the other and language. As Derrida says in *Le monolinguisme de l'autre*,⁸⁸ the other comes within language or language comes from the other. Article [3.] suggests that (a) the other is not

⁸² *Ibid.* Heidegger says: "Dasein is an entity which I in each case I myself am (*je ich selbst bin*)".

⁸³ Cf. Derrida 1967b, 200ff./ET 136ff. where he questions the meaning of ontology, primacy and first philosophy in relation to Heidegger.

⁸⁴ Derrida 1992a, 49.

⁸⁵ Derrida 1992b, 195.

⁸⁶ Of course there is "Pour l'amour de Lacan" Derrida (1993d) but the relation remains ambiguous. See Stavrakakis 1999, 144–146. For Lacanian ethics, see Lacan 1986.

⁸⁷ See Derrida 1998b. cf. Derrida 1997.

⁸⁸ Derrida 1996b, 127ff.

necessarily a human being and (b) Derrida's account resembles Blanchot more than Levinas, i.e. that the other would be "absolutely unknown" and "absolutely outside" as a relation to *plus d'une*. This is because Derrida is interpreted here more in the context of Blanchot, or the political, and not in the context of Levinas, in the context of theology. Both Blanchot and Levinas have been often studied through Derrida, but studying Blanchot can also illuminate the ambiguous relationship between Derrida's and Levinas' philosophies. Derrida's "turn to religion" is somewhat reflected in [3.] and [4.] but not in the context of Levinas, and it should be noted that this should be understood both as a theological and political turn.⁸⁹

As was mentioned above, the problem of ethics and ethnicity in Derrida's work or in deconstruction in general has been studied industriously.⁹⁰ Yet it is not clear how strongly we should develop this because these ethics have the character of metaethics, questioning the possibility of ethics. Since the word *ēthos* means a habitation (*Aufenthalte, séjour*), the Derridean ethics is atypical, about an impossible place, about the *mi-lieu* of in-between.

Derrida's later work can also be seen from the perspective of the tension between Levinas and Blanchot. In Derrida's discussion about politics and the other, it seems that the Blanchotian other (or stranger) remains totally unknown. A good example can be found in

⁸⁹ See De Vries 1999 about the relation between theology and Derrida as well as Hart 1989 and Taylor 1990 for "deconstructive theology" or atheology. I attended Derrida's seminar in Winter 1995 in Paris where some of the material of his important text on religion, *Foi et Savoir* (Derrida 1996), was presented.

⁹⁰ I find myself in agreement with de Vries who points to "theopolitology" in relation to the notions of place and politics in Derrida's works (see for example de Vries 1999, 93–94, 153). Political and ethical should be seen in relation to the theological and to Heidegger's questioning of onto-theological tradition and religion. It seems that one has to take seriously the imagined dialogue between Heidegger and "theologians" at the end of *De l'esprit* (Derrida 1987b, cf. De Vries, 1999, 106) and, for example, Heidegger's new modes of *Grundstimmungen* and the notion of the "last God" in the *Beiträge* (Heidegger 1989).

the tenth chapter of *Politics of Friendship*.⁹¹ It is absolutely unknown, but it is not the absolute other. This is so because the absolute other implies decision (or a temporality of decision) but we have only the order of undecidability. This also means that if there is a law of the other, we cannot know it in so far as the other is unknowable. To support this argument one could claim that Derrida seems to be more interested in the impossible modality of dying in Blanchot's work⁹² than in the Levinasian concept of the death of the other.⁹³ Already in *Aporias* Derrida said that the Blanchotian impossibility of dying speaks about the same thing as Heidegger and completely other things as Heidegger.⁹⁴

Derridean politics imply philosophical work on the notion of the political, which usually means the essence of the political, as formulated by Jean-Luc Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe at the beginning of the eighties.⁹⁵ They speak about the space opened by the retreat of politics and which therefore does not lead to the politics of Derrida. Derridean "politics" are thus more atypical than utopical. Of course there are many remarks in *Specters of Marx* and *The Other Heading*⁹⁶ about capitalistic society, centro-eurocentrism and the modalities of poverty, but they are formulated – as in Beardsworth⁹⁷ – in a way that cannot be reduced to actual politics, and which gives force to Derrida's political and atypical philosophy. To put Derrida's account otherwise, one can also speak of the

⁹¹ Derrida 1994c, 301–340.

⁹² See Derrida 1998b. *La Demeure* is also a title for modalities of habitation in *Totalité et Infini* of Levinas (1971).

⁹³ The dying, or the dissolution of the first person narrative (*je*) to the third person (*il*) as the "il y a", being a splitting of the subject (Blanchot 1969, 556–567), is an infinite process and also in the field of impossibility. Classically this happens in *Thomas l'obscur*, to which Levinas refers in *L'existence à l'existant*. See Blanchot 1950 where to which Levinas 1986 refers. Cf. also Critchley 1997, 31–83.

⁹⁴ Derrida 1994a, 337.

⁹⁵ Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy 1997.

⁹⁶ Derrida 1993 and 1991c.

⁹⁷ Beardsworth 1996. This could be seen also as a weakness for those philosophers who prefer more "political struggle". See Dews 1995, 1–7.

politics of living and death, which perhaps implies “il faut bien manger” because one has to eat. The question is about “il faut bien mourir”, one has to die well (*eu-thanatos*).⁹⁸

In [4.] and [3.] the relation between Derrida and Schmitt on the one hand, and the relation between Schmitt and Heidegger on the other, has not been developed in the strong sense (the differentiation between levels of decision in the strong and weak sense as decidability and undecidability). In Derrida’s interpretation of Benjamin there is the peculiar mode of impossibility where even “state of emergency” becomes a stable situation. For the sake of the balance and clarity of the thesis my decision was to put not so much weight on the legal interpretation of Derrida.

One could also focus on the question of the Thing (*la Chose, das Ding*) as developed in *Specters of Marx* and *The Given Time*.⁹⁹ In short, law has also the meaning of the thing, but there is also the spectral modality of the Law. In the discussion of givenness and the donation, the gift and the present, it seems that even if we say that there is time or temporality (*circulatio*) of the gift (in the Marxian concept of goods), there is also the non-originary movement of the giving. There is no original present, and no originary givenness of being and time, as Derrida claims on the basis of Heidegger’s *Zeit und Sein*¹⁰⁰ at the beginning of *The Given Time*.¹⁰¹ The originary gift may be false in the sense that there is no originary property, it is counterfeit money that gives credibility to the so-called monetary system.

The same could already be seen *Structure, Sign and Play*,¹⁰² where there is no originary origin for the sign system, even in the form of the non-centre or the absence of the origin. Derrida uses a distinction between general and restricted economies in different situations. The general level is always unstable and undecidable while the restricted level is stable, decidable, and determinate in specific contexts. The gift and giving is always at the restricted level,

⁹⁸ See Derrida 1992.

⁹⁹ Derrida 1993 and 1991b.

¹⁰⁰ Heidegger 1969.

¹⁰¹ Derrida 1993b, 18ff.

¹⁰² Derrida 1967b.

and not at the general level of expenditure, as was said in *From General Economy to Restricted Economy*.¹⁰³ The structural and genealogical modes of deconstruction are on the level of restricted writing, but the disseminative force of writing is the work of the general level of writing, for example, in Mallarmé's theory and practice of writing. The distinction between these levels should be transcendental, differential and in principle decidable, but as Derrida's work shows, this quasi-transcendental level operates on the level of differences. This would mean that only a God knows without differences, if we follow the proposition offered by Fink, but whether a God exists and whether he can speak is another question.

Derrida's thinking of the political (contra politics) thus draws on Heidegger – this refers particularly to the topological aspects of the *polos*, which is connected to the meaning of *polis* and politics, in the sense that Heidegger gives it in his Hölderlin lectures, discussing the origin and limits of *polis*, *pantopolis/apolis*.¹⁰⁴ The topological movement is implied in the essence of the politics, in the turning between the poles, or in the vertical movement of the turning, the eternal return with the possibility of the turning. In *Of Grammatology* this was called the turn of writing.¹⁰⁵ Article [4.] explicates this turning in relation Celan's theory of the line and tropo-topology.¹⁰⁶

To come back to the question of intersubjectivity in [2.]. I did not develop the question of the other and intersubjectivity in Husserl any further because I was so impressed by the possibility of representing Heidegger as being more solipsistic than Husserl was in his last phase. There is more to say about the relationship between Husserl and Heidegger in general and on the theme of intersubjectivity in particular. The theme of "first philosophy" or metaphysics also remains open but there is the duality of onto-theology in phenomenology as the first philosophy.

These points also lead one to say something about the nature of a thesis, of positing (*setzen*) something. The heterogeneous nature of

¹⁰³ Derrida 1967b.

¹⁰⁴ Heidegger 1980b.

¹⁰⁵ See *supra* note 27.

¹⁰⁶ Celan 1986.

Derrida's *œuvre* means that Derrida is perhaps best approached by means of an article dissertation. This is not to say that the article form could not posit some general thematic or subject about Derrida, but that it is perhaps the best way to affirm and emphasise the interplay of various aspects and horizons in his work. One must admit the impossibility of the attempt to purify Derrida or to offer a purely philosophical interpretation in comparing the original Derridean text to a reductive interpretation of it. This means also a respect for the work of Derrida. Nevertheless, it is also possible to offer a broader view of Derrida – for example in comparing Schmitt and Celan through Derrida, and in trying to work from philosophy to literature and vice-versa. Perhaps I will end up with more suggestions like “this is not the right way to begin interpreting Derrida” than positive suggestions. This is done in two ways: there is the a defensive tone in my philosophical interpretation of Derrida,¹⁰⁷ but also the inability to determine the ultimate truth about him. This also means the possibility of going in other directions. Perhaps a positive example of a good way of interpreting Derrida, both in the philosophical and tropological sense, is Marcos Siscar's *Derrida. Rhétorique et philosophie*.¹⁰⁸

To say something new about the work of Derrida has not been my primary purpose. I have tried more to clarify some contexts for reading Derrida, or use the *via negativa* in exploring what Derrida probably does not mean. Such a way of reading is, however, only provisional because it is obviously then a question of how to read more than to convince the reader of the question of why read Derrida at all. What strikes us here is that in the work of Derrida there are some extremely different and hostile interpretations – although this could also be said about many classical philosophers. One's own position could be formulated around these conflicting interpretations. Nevertheless, my reading interprets – and perhaps too strongly – Derrida as a transcendentalist. He appears here more

¹⁰⁷ See for example Evans 1991 and Dillon 1995 as readings that pretend to be objective readings of Derrida in finding faults and reductionism.

¹⁰⁸ Siscar 1998.

as modernist than post-modernist, and he is somehow continuing the heritage of the Enlightenment, in the form of the *phainesthai*, expressed in the phenomenological language of light and darkness.¹⁰⁹

We have avoided the famous confrontations between for example Derrida and Searle, Derrida and Gadamer, Derrida and Ricœur or Derrida and Habermas. This approach is also a way of defending a certain way of doing philosophy before making any claims about a certain kind of philosophy in relation to some "Parisian mode of philosophy". In this light, there is also the famous difficulty of using some concepts of Derrida, like *différance*, which, as they are so easy to use everywhere, have less and less to express. "Atopologies" is here also used to mean an epistemological foundation, an origin. If there is something new or radical (in the sense of a radix) in Derrida's philosophy it could be called atopologies, which means that everything is not reduced to the philosophical *topoi*. It is noteworthy that Derrida has no positive theory about signification, the subject or Being, to name a few *topoi*, but this does not mean that we should give up speaking about metaphysical terms like onto-theology, God, death, etc. Derrida does not offer a new theory about subject or signification, but once again this does not mean that they are not functioning in philosophy and in the history of philosophy. He is showing how the topos and atopus function in the history of philosophy as the terms of familiarity and foreignness, or nearness and distance, or homeliness and estrangement (*unheimlichkeit*).

Derrida also has a tendency to speak about things in a larger sense or scale; but he is claimed to be very unclear in stating his own opinions. It could even be said that Derrida can only blame himself for being so poorly understood.¹¹⁰ In Derrida's philosophy one can thus see two tendencies which would otherwise have made his discourse more penetrable. First is the formalistic demand for close reading of the texts (yet this is not enough) and then there is the denial of the philosophy of the subject that fits with the scientific

¹⁰⁹ De Vries 1999, 359–430 makes the same remark.

¹¹⁰ Howells 1999, 70–71.

tendency of analytical philosophy and the philosophy of science.¹¹¹ One can say that Derrida makes too much of the subject in order to defend a philosophy of subject (for example, from a Sartrean position).¹¹² This claim – which originates with Dieter Henrich – is that the Heideggerians always make too much out of a strong and certain Cartesian subject, which in reality never was as strong as it was constructed in structuralism or Heideggerian “History of Being”.¹¹³

We have not yet been able to posit methodological questions here, but they are dealt with briefly in the next section and in [1.], which is concerned with the quest for the origin. In general, a retrogression functions here as a kind of phenomenologico-deconstructive methodology of looking backward. This seeking is concerned with going back to the most primordial level of evidence, or primary synthesis – and there is the movement forwards and backwards which constitutes the possibilities of reflection and thinking. The methodological movement in looking backwards thus has had two motives: to seek for the origins and to reflect backwards to such a seeking. The origin has not been the central question here, although the focus has been on such levels as transcendental aesthetics, the experience of death, or the primordial *Urarchē*. We have attempted to question such a project. We must ask what the primary reasons are, but they can no longer be posited as first or primary – they seem to be constructed as an after-effect, chiasmatically *hysteron proteron*. Besides, we have the tendency to interpret the notion of origin in an intertextual sense, for example, in saying that the origin of Derrida’s work is in his writings on Husserl. This dissertation also questions this kind of argument – what gives philosophy its power of repeatability if not the possibility of signs in general? The hermeneutical language is avoided here because the question of *Hermes* is not worked through. Derrida is interpreted more in opposition to hermeneutics or to an approach which aims at

¹¹¹ I refer here to Manfred Frank (1989) who defends the philosophy of subject against “French neo-structuralism” and against “positivism”.

¹¹² See Howells 1999, 130ff.

¹¹³ See Dews 1995, 169–193.

consensus. In addition, we recall that in Finland the way of reading in philosophy and aesthetics is analytical and the way of reading a text is strongly formalistic (e.g. New Criticism and narratology in literary theory). I trust that it will be fruitful to read these articles as an attempt to avoid positing a totality of text and decomposing it into its basic components. Some formalism is always necessary as a preparatory basis for reading a text.

If we try to clarify the basis for interpreting Derrida hermeneutically in the sense of the possibility of an opening, or speaking that one ought to (*il faut*) begin from “wherever we are (*quelque part nous sommes*)”,¹¹⁴ it means that there is a possible commencement in turning through atopolgy. One could say that the point of reading begins from (textual) differences and not from the possibility of understanding – we do not have the presumed foreknowledge. Reading – in a sense – is also the possibility, or pre-condition for understanding. Reading, yes, but I first recognise that “*il faut lire Derrida*” contra Christian Ferrié.¹¹⁵ Here the theory of reading has some connections with gathering in the Heideggerian sense, or *logos* as gathering, *Versammlung*.¹¹⁶ Some kind of theory of “Derrida in general” is functioning where the interpretation is organised in an orbit of avoiding the structuralist horizon of interpretation of Derrida. This means a systematic avoidance of the question of psychoanalysis because it would have to involve an account of the *œuvre* of Jacques Lacan. Some important philosophers for Derrida

¹¹⁴ Derrida 1967a, 233/ET 162.

¹¹⁵ In his *Pourquoi lire Derrida?* Ferrié posits the question of reading of Derrida. He may be right in speaking about the decisionism of the starting point of reading – but it is also to remember that the place of reading is exorbitant. (cf. Ferrié 1998, 153–170 concerning “The Exorbitant. Questions of Method” in *Of Grammatology* (Derrida 1967a, 231–237/ET 157–164). But it goes beyond my understanding of the concept reading affirm that it is not necessary to read through Derrida’s texts, as Ferrié does (1998, 192). A few texts would be then sufficient. The minimum should be some knowledge of the corpus of Derrida at the level Derrida usually works of. As an example I think of the reading of Levinas, Heidegger and Husserl in *Violence and Metaphysics* (Derrida 1967b).

¹¹⁶ See Heidegger 1983, 111.

are rarely mentioned – like Nietzsche and Hegel – because they do not seem to be such central thinkers on the aforementioned horizon.¹¹⁷

Although these articles do not deal with the problem of metaphor and metaphoricity, there is a kind of Heideggerian distrust of metaphors in my work, which has led me to write more metonymically – even though this is still a metaphorical expression. The question of figurality is here thought of more through metaphoricity.¹¹⁸ This has also led to a kind of “a general citationality” that could be discussed in the context of some “restricted citationality”, which would not be simply explication at the level of close reading. This is a kind of reference system that could be described as “supposing already the knowledge of the problems of anglophonic Derrida studies and what important Derrida texts there are”. One main point is thus not to speak from the position of philosophy, but more from a point of view of a kind of “Derrida-studies” or “research in Derrida” which is not simply limited to the philosophical. Surely the main philosophemes are origins, death, law, justice, and writing. They do not focus on the inevitable claim that Derrida does no more than simply repeat the same arguments, themes and technicalities of deconstruction everywhere. There is a displacement of *topos* as a rigorousness, as a shift in thinking the way of *Strenge Wissenschaft*. To refer to “Philosophy as a Rigorous Science” means to go to the primary evidence, or to the primordial experience: “Philosophy, however, is essentially a science of true beginnings [*Anfängen*], or origins [*Ursprüngen*], of *rizômata pantôn*”.¹¹⁹ If there is a

¹¹⁷ For Hegel, see Barnett 1998.

¹¹⁸ Although I discuss Paul de Man’s theory of tropology I also refer to the Derridean theory of metaphoricity (“La mythologie blanche” in Derrida 1972b and “Le retrait de la métaphore” in Derrida 1987c). One of the briefest arguments is in de Man’s *Epistemology of Metaphor* “[T]he relationship and the distinction between philosophy cannot be made in terms of a distinction between aesthetic and epistemological categories. All philosophy is condemned, to the extent that it is dependent on figuration, to be literary and, as the depository of this very problem, all literature is to some extent philosophical.” (De Man 1996, 70)

¹¹⁹ Husserl 1965, 146; in the original *Logos I* (1911) pagination 97.

position that I am taking here, it is that Derrida's thinking advances in the opening of doing *Strenge Wissenschaft*, where there is no longer any space left for the high ideality of the science, which means putting the notion of science or the notion of essence (*Wesen*) of philosophy in parenthesis, "the undoing of logocentrism", "within a closure"¹²⁰ or "limits of philosophy and science".¹²¹ This may be called taking a step beyond and at the same time not taking it. It is the possibility of rigorousness, or, if there is philosophy, it is a way of defending or taking care of philosophy, in the sense Derrida uses the word "solicitation" [undoing] in *Writing and Difference*.¹²²

5. The Notion of the Origin and the Deconstruction of the Origin

The name "origin" rarely occurs in these articles; it is openly and thematically discussed only in [1.]. The theme of this work was originally the concept of the origin, under the name of the deconstruction of the origin. While there also are some references to the concept of origin in [2.], they disappear completely like the name of Husserl. This does not mean that the question of origins is therefore abandoned; it means rather that the subject is discussed in different terms. In phenomenology asking after an origin means also to pose a (phenomenological) transcendental question about the genesis of

¹²⁰ I refer here to the opening and closing of the chapter "Of Grammatology as a Positive Science" in Derrida 1967a. Derrida's Husserl interpretations are in Derrida 1962/1974, 1967c, 1972b and Derrida 1990.

¹²¹ Husserl's critique of *Weltanschauungsphilosophie* and relativistic empiricism and its impact on Derrida could be interpreted in the context of relativism and anti-relativism. This is done by Norris (1998, 411ff., cf. Norris 1997), although his interpretation of Derrida as "a transcendental realist" in the context of scientific realism seems to me to be too strong, since there are different realisms. Derrida (1998, 525–526) in his reply to Norris asks what the real (*réel*) of reality is and points to the mode of impossibility outside empirical science and phenomenology.

¹²² See Bass 1978, xvi.

something.¹²³ This is also the point made by Jean-Luc Nancy, who formulated the importance of the origin in Derrida as – now frequently quoted – his “passion of the origin”.¹²⁴ However, this does not mean that this is a causal question in the sense that if we know the origin (*aitia*), we also know the consequence. It does not mean asking an origin of a thing but also the origin of the origins, both in the mundane and in the transcendental sense. The “deconstructed origin” is also a question of atotopics, understood not only as a temporalised origin, but also as the place of the so-called “transcendental difference”: “The difference would be transcendental”, as Derrida says in the *Introduction to the Origin of Geometry*.¹²⁵ What then could be the place of this difference?

The question of the origin for Derrida is, in a too-well-known formula, that we should abandon the whole question of the origin. But today it is also significant that we should not consider the absence of a centre or an origin as a new origin. In his famous “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences” Derrida writes:

One could say – rigorously using that word whose scandalous signification is always obliterated in French – that this movement of play, permitted by the lack or absence of a center or origin, is the movement of *supplementarity*. One cannot determine the center and exhaust the totalization because the sign which replaces the center, which supplements it, taking the center’s place in its absence – this sign is added, occurs as a surplus, as a *supplement*.¹²⁶

Of course, if there was a theory of the sign in general in Derrida’s work, it could not be an explanation of what a sign is as such before the question of such a “suchness” is put in parenthesis. It is also well known how Derrida develops both the supplementary logic of the

¹²³ I use here the terms “origins” and “genesis” interchangeable; but in phenomenology “genesis” usually means an origin for the consciousness after the transcendental-phenomenological reduction.

¹²⁴ Nancy 1990, 227–331. The origin means for Nancy transcendental and the sense (*sens*); he formulates it: “La différence est la passion” (at 331).

¹²⁵ Derrida 1962/1974, 171/ET, 153.

¹²⁶ Derrida 1967b, 423/ET, 289.

sign and the origin in *Of Grammatology*. His analysis is clear and I do not call his notion of supplementarity of the origin in question. The origin should be abandoned but not the question of the origin – one must always make a recursion back to the impossibility of the origin. Thus, in the last chapter *Of Grammatology*, “*The Supplement of (at) the Origin*” Derrida writes the following:

The question is of an originary supplement, if this absurd expression may be risked, totally unacceptable as it is within classical logic. Rather the supplement of the origin: which supplements the failing origin and which is yet not derived; this supplement is, as one says of a spare part (*une pièce*), of the original make (*d’origine*) [or a document, establishing the origin.]¹²⁷

If this is acceptable it means that there is no use deconstructing the origin or deconstructing some other places of origins; rather it is a strategy – if one can still use the expression – the consequence of the “deconstruction of the origin”. It is more like elaborating and working through other notions that are in relation to some origins, or to the possibility of asking for the origin. This does not mean a “deconstruction of Western metaphysics”.

You can read through the possibility of such a project but it does not mean to point out what the necessity for this project is or the places to deconstruct. It means the questioning of the origin as such, as if the origin has never existed or as if it has not yet come into existence. It means putting in parentheses the notion of the origin of the origin and also putting in parentheses an origin of philosophy, origin of literature, origin of law. It also goes without saying that the origin as the supplementary origin and deconstructed origin means the notion of difference, often articulated as Derrida’s famous notion of *différance*, meaning both differing and deferring.¹²⁸ It is always the question of the place of *différance* – as if it were an existing place – which is always comprehensible, in the phenomenological time-consciousness, the originating self-presence

¹²⁷ Derrida 1967a, 442/ET, 313.

¹²⁸ See Collins and Maybling (1996, 75–77) for the most convenient description at least of four senses of *différance*. cf. Wood and Bernasconi (1988).

of a transcendental and apodeictical ego, that can be understood as a different move in the opening of *Dasein's* authentic temporality. *Différance* sets the origin as well as the structure and genesis in movement. In this sense the origin refers to the famous materiality of writing, where spacing is introduced as the original opening. Thus it is a question of *Ur-materie*, *Ur-Archē* or the originary origin as arche-synthesis. It must thus mean something which is outside the system, the world or the consciousness – as an impossible meaningfulness (as the exemplary *non-lieu* of *khôra* shows). The origin is one of the operative concepts in the history of philosophy. It is always thematised but there is a difference, not to say opposition, between thematic and operative concepts that are always in the operative field. This possibility seems to be the singular invention of Derrida – the non-thought, hidden, lost, forgotten outside the system of philosophy, politics and *logos*, which is not reduced to the logic of the same.

In the language of analytical philosophy one could argue that Derrida defends a version of holism and the determinacy of meaning to some extent. The philosophy of Derrida can be characterised as antisubjectivistic in the same way that modern analytical philosophy has eliminated the subject, but in Derrida's sense the question of the subject should not be eliminated altogether, it should be situated. This means that in philosophy we still have ethical and political questions that are not differentiated from philosophy as in the analytical tradition. There is no pure ineffability in a Wittgensteinian sense, be it in ethics, aesthetics or the semantics of language. Derrida should be interpreted in a certain tradition and here we are more in favour of phenomenology than structuralism. It means also a defence of the continuity of asking metaphysical questions to their limits, such as asking what (or where) justice is, what death means, what the foundation is and so on.

In conclusion I argue that in these four articles some kind of backward reading of Derrida is done, from the work of 90s to the earlier work. The same problems can be found in the older texts; or it could be said that instead of starting from the beginning there is a reading backwards in order to explain certain motives, such as an *arkhē*, functioning in the later works. It would be a superfluous claim

to argue that one could represent them in a purely chronological way. I hope I have given a more detailed explanation of some problems, because there is a stabilising manner in Derrida's work that also provides a basis for de-stabilisation. I hope that one can benefit from this kind of reading which indicates the "doctrine" to be read back to the beginnings.

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The Quest for Origin. From Husserl's Phenomenological Archaeology to the Deconstruction of Archē

Phänomenologische Archäologie, das Aufgraben der in ihren Baugliedern verborgenen konstitutiven Bauten, der Bauten apperzeptiver Sinnesleistungen, die uns fertig vorliegen als Erfahrungswelt. Das zurückfragen und dann Blosslegen der Seinssinn schaffenden Einzelleistungen bis zu den letzten, den 'Archai', um von diesen aufwärts wieder im Geist erstehen [zu] lassen die selbstverständliche Einheit der so vielfach fundierten Seinsgeltungen mit ihren relativen Seienden. Wie bei der gewöhnlichen Archäologie: Rekonstruktion, Verstehen im 'Zick-Zack'! Edmund Husserl, *Manuscript C 16 78a*.¹

1. Reminders of an Archive

Aristotle, in Δ 1 of *Metaphysics*, speaks about the different meanings of *Archē*, principle. *Archē* means a beginning and a commandment; but according to Aristotle it is also common to all "beginnings" to be the thing "from which something either exists or comes into being

¹ Cited in Anthony J. Steinbock, *Home and Beyond. General Phenomenology after Husserl*. (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1995), 284, note 12. cf. Gerhard Funke, "A Transcendental-Phenomenological Investigation Concerning Universal Idealism, Intentional Analysis and the Genesis of *Habitus*, *Archē*, *Phansis*, *Hexis*, *Logos*. Translated and edited by Robert M. Harlan. In W. Mc Kenna, R.M. Harlan, L.E. Winters, (ed.) *Apriori and the World. European Contributions to Husserlian Phenomenology*. (The Hague: Nijhoff 1981), 73–75. Funke referred to same the *topos* in Husserl in 1957.

and becomes known."² Jacques Derrida writes in nearly the same manner in his book *Archive Fever* about the archive and its value: "Arkhe, we recall, means at once the *commencement* and the *commandment*."³ For Derrida the notion of archive and *archē* means something incomplete, because an archive is something lost, not present, a sign of something.⁴ Since, the location of the documents in the archive has the jurisdicative value of "speaking the law,"⁵ the archive may conserve and institute like the law (*nomos*).⁶ Derrida speaks about the intersection between the place of the archive and the law, about topo-nomology. He says that the economy of the archive makes the law and also safeguards the law, as an archontic function.⁷ This archontic function reminds us of Husserl who, explaining the final meaning and teleology of phenomenology in *Krisis*, remarked that phenomenology has its own archontic function in guiding the phenomenological community (or mankind).⁸ The archive and archonts seem never to be far away from the character of phenomenological reasoning.

The question of archive also shows in a different light when Derrida states in the 1990 preface to his *mémoire* work from 1953–1954, *Le problème de la genèse dans la philosophie de Husserl*⁹ that his early work may have some documentary value, because he is unsure

² Met 1013a17. For a commentary, see Pierre Aubenque, *Le problème de l'être chez Aristote* (Paris: PUF, 1961), 193.

³ Jacques Derrida, *Mal d'Archive* (Paris: Galilée 1995), 11/ET = *Archive Fever. A Freudian Impression*. Translated by Eric Prenowitz. (Chicago and London: Chicago UP 1996), 1. The structure of Derrida's book obviously imitates Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* with its starting again and again, but this could also be read as a phenomenological way of beginning, pointing out a new aspect of the intentional object and its structure and meaning.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 55–56/ET 33–34.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 13/ET 2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 20/ET 7.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 2/ET 3.

⁸ Hua VI, 336. See Schumann 1988, 161–180 on phenomenology's archontic function.

⁹ Paris: PUF 1990. Here after P.

of its publication.¹⁰ Derrida even speaks about care, care of knowledge (*souci de savoir*) and he even denies himself philosophical interpretation of such an early work. There is – or must always be – a caring for the documents.

We are trying here to read this document from the archive as well as his two other volumes on Husserl in the light of recent phenomenology and the debates concerning the so-called “deconstructive” reading of Husserl. I will also deal with the theme of the origin from the Heideggerian viewpoint and then, as an excursus, discuss the Fregean theory of reference, before getting back to the problems of the relation between static and genetic phenomenology.

The main question here is whether, if Derrida’s reading of Husserl fails, is there any reason to trust his other readings, i.e. deconstruction? Derrida’s reading of Husserl is at least thought to be “philosophical” – compared to later and more “playful” works – and thus the basis for interpreting Derrida’s philosophy. Of course this question of one’s point of departure is not altogether incorrect and there has been a tendency to seek a key, or origin for his work.¹¹ There is no question of saying that Derrida’s first work(s) have not attracted the attention of Husserlians or the Derrideans.¹² Since

¹⁰ P VI.

¹¹ For example, *Introduction to Edmund Husserl’s Origin of Geometry* is the key to Derrida’s work, as Dane Depp affirms in his “A Husserlian Response to Derrida’s Early Criticism of Phenomenology”. *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, Vol. 18. No. 3., October 1987. According to Depp, Derrida failed to prove that phenomenology is incapable of inquiring; this is something that is read from Derrida’s work – the question is more about the limits of phenomenological inquiry and method than its incapacity.

¹² This is also contrary to Rudolf Bernet who says in “On Derrida’s ‘Introduction’ to Husserl’s *Origin of Geometry*” in Hugh J. Silverman (ed.) *Derrida and Deconstruction*, London: Routledge 1989) that the work in question is “more or less equally ignored by the standard interpreters of Husserl’s work and by the supporters of Derrida’s thought” (1989, 139–140). Of course Derrida’s early work is now widely noted – but the problem seems to interpret it from Derrida’s more recognised doctrine.

Presses Universitaires de France has now published all three volumes about Husserl, *Introduction au L'origine de la géométrie de Husserl* (1961), *La voix et le phénomène* (1967) and *Le problème de la genèse dans la philosophie de Husserl*, this seems to suggest such an origin for his work. This means that we should a) establish a continuity in Derrida's work and b) the continuity of his Husserl interpretations.¹³ Another point of view is to see Derrida as continuing the tradition of phenomenology.¹⁴ If so, we would also state that Husserl himself developed some notions like the theory of intersubjectivity more deeply than his followers¹⁵ and it also seems that Derrida was ahead of his time in seeing the importance of notions like crisis, responsibility, the other, and passive synthesis. Derrida's work on Husserl could be traced mainly to between 1954 and 1968, and of course Husserl scholarship has shifted to a different stage since.¹⁶ But some

¹³ Of course, one is here affirming more a continuity in Derrida's work on Husserl. On the problem of discontinuity see Leonard Lawlor "Phenomenology and Metaphysics: Deconstruction in *La Voix et le phénomène*", *Journal of British Society for Phenomenology*. Vol. 27. No. 2, May 1996, 118–121. Lawlor also sees the Derridian Husserl as a rupture in the metaphysics of presence and not the last instance of "Western Metaphysics" (1996, 116). Contrary to this, Martin Schwab does not accept Husserl as a philosopher of presence, so that Derrida's countermove seems to be insufficient. See Schwab's "The Rejection of Origin. Derrida's Interpretation of Husserl." *Topoi* 5, 1986.

¹⁴ Stephan Strasser (1986) "Von einer Husserl interpretation zu einer Husserl-Kritik" and Rudolf Bernet (1986) "Differenz und Anwesenheit" in *Phänomenologische Forschungen*, 18. See also Hans Ruin, *Enigmatic Origins* (Stockholm, AUS 1995), who sees Derrida continuing the French phenomenological tradition – Ricoeur is mentioned – and Heideggerian genealogy. (1995, 19–21) According to Ruin, Derrida is going "far beyond the phenomenological program" (1995, 21).

¹⁵ This argument is developed by Dan Zahavi, *Husserl und die transzendente Intersubjektivität. Eine antwort am Sprachgrammatische Kritik*. Dordrecht: Kluwer 1996.

¹⁶ But see Derrida 1998, 243–250 for a recent discussion of Husserl's famous "*La terre se meut pas*" (trad. fr. D. Franck, D. Pradelle, F. Lavigne, Minuit: Paris 1989) and about the concept of the world, community, ego and consciousness.

evidence of the correctness of Derrida's "intuitions" about inter-subjectivity and cultural phenomenology has emerged following a few publications by the Husserl archive, for example *Hua XI* and *Hua XIII – Hua XV*.¹⁷ Although it is always possible to read Derrida in a non-sympathetic way and try to "knock out" Derridean deconstruction in proving the continuity of the errors in argument which also limit philosophy to the proper and improper ways of argument.¹⁸ This also entails a decision about philosophy, which could be formed only in a horizon of undecidability – how is this decision to be justified when the decision removes all the causes of a foundation?¹⁹

¹⁷ This is not the place to discuss Husserl manuscripts that Derrida uses, since I have not been able to consult them. See P 241–242 and P 287. Derrida refers to *Urkonstitution* (D 1, D 9, D 12) and Reduction (B III), and Constitution of the Time (C 6, C 12, C 13). He refers also to *Mundane Phänomenologie*, A IV.

¹⁸ The most detailed effort of Evans 1991. Evans shows how Derrida reads Husserl intentionally wrongly – and as a reductive reading of Derrida there is not much to add to this kind of approach. One of the most clear examples of Evans starting point is when he refers to Bernet (1986, 52): "Bernet is saying, I take it, not that Derrida is immune to such errors (indeed, we shall see that Derrida is quite vulnerable to them), but rather that the correlate of a defensive immunization of Derrida's text would be a single-minded concentration on errors would miss the thrust of Derrida's endeavor." (Evans 1991, XVIII). Indeed, we shall see later how "Once these details of Husserl's analysis are brought in, it becomes obvious that Derrida's claim – namely, that Husserl's own premises sanction precisely the opposite conclusion from the one Husserl actually draws – is dead wrong" (*ibid.*, 136–137) and Evans concludes: "None of these critical reconsiderations attract Derrida's attention, and the reason is fairly obvious." (*ibid.*, 138)

¹⁹ To continue the debate with Evans, who seems to be demanding a logical critique but still cannot accept the indecidability horizon of decidability. "The Project [of *Speech and Phenomena*] of such a logical critique might well create the appearance of being itself immune to question, but it would create that appearance by ruling out of court the question that inquires into the justification of this decision" (1991, XVI). The reference to Derrida is to VP 6/SP 7: "How can we justify the decision which subordinates a reflection on the sign to logic?"

This is not the place to affirm a source point of Derrida's work, but to ask some questions, or continue to ask the questions about questioning its origin. Why should we inquire into its origin and genesis?²⁰ What is an origin or genesis, and what distinguishes the origin and what derives from it?

In phenomenology, questioning concerns the primary reasons, *Archai*, and Husserl even affirms that phenomenological archaeology is questioning of these primary reasons in the zigzag movement of reconstruction and understanding.²¹ The starting-point for the phenomenological philosopher is to ask about the origin and the reason – for the origin of reason; for example, Eugen Fink states this in the claim that phenomenology seeks the origin of the world, like the first philosophers.²² This recalls of *philosophia protē* or metaphysics in the sense of Aristotle, who stated in *The Metaphysics* that philosophy means questioning of the *Archai*.²³

Husserl sees phenomenology as *philosophia protē* in a general sense and does not state any secondary philosophies.²⁴ In his lectures

²⁰ Rudolf Bernet, *La vie du sujet. Recherches sur l'interprétation de Husserl dans la phénoménologie* (Paris: PUF 1994), 163–166 seems to say that in Derrida there is a forgetting (a silence) on Merleau-Ponty, who asked these questions. He cites Merleau-Ponty's *Signes* (Paris: Gallimard 1960, 201): "La tradition est oubli des origines, disait le dernier Husserl".

²¹ Husserl, *Ms 16*, 78, cited from Steinbock above (see note 1).

²² Eugen Fink, "Die Phänomenologische Philosophie des Edmunds Husserls in der Gegenwärtigen Kritik", *Kant-Studien*, Band XXXVIII, 3/4, 1934: "Die Grundfrage der Phänomenologie, zu der sie von vielen, an traditionelle Probleme anknüpfenden Einsätzen her unterweds ist und in der sich ihr Radikaler Gegensatz zum Kritizismus offenbart, lässt sich formulieren als die Frage nach dem *Ursprung der Welt*" (1934, 22). Fink states that this is not naive or pre-critical but a transcendental question. (1934, 23)

²³ *Met.* 981b 28–29: "sophian peri ta prōta aitia kai tas arkhas". see also *Met* 983b 7 ff. I here leave aside some Heideggerian questions about the twofoldness of ontology in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* – the question about Being in general and the position of theology. See Aubenque 1962 on these problems.

²⁴ See Marion 1999, 790ff. for the some other weaknesses in the argument. Marion also discusses some other "first philosophies", such as Descartes' *prima philosophia*.

he derives *Erste Philosophie* from Aristotle, who calls his metaphysics “primary philosophy” which starts from “Being qua Being” (*ontos he on*).²⁵ For Husserl this means the phenomenological philosophy of beginnings with the problem of beginning (*Anfang*).²⁶ Aristotle’s first philosophy means for Husserl “general metaphysics”, and he points out Aristotle as an originator of scientific (*Wissenschaft*) and systematic philosophy (logic as ontology) after Plato’s dialectical method.²⁷ Claiming the affinity of Aristotle and the phenomenological project, Husserl says that Aristotle’s psychology made him the first philosopher of subjectivity.²⁸ Husserl notes that Aristotle’s theory of Being (*Seinslehre*) deals with the highest problems of philosophy, culminating in theology.

Aristotle remained dogmatic (positivistic) from the point of view of phenomenological philosophy as did the tradition which followed him.²⁹ This may be the reason why Husserl unfortunately did not elaborate the meaning of Aristotelian ontology as Heidegger did at the same time. Heidegger, of course, started from Aristotle’s problem of the many meanings of being (*to on*). In Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* the primary meaning of being is substance (*ousia*).³⁰ Despite Heidegger’s development of fundamental ontology and categories of being in *Sein und Zeit* one could remark how phenomenological language simply repeats the terminology of Aristotle, although the terms should carry a slightly different phenomenological meaning. In appearance, the terms in which Husserl designates the content and structure of intentional consciousness is reminiscent of the structure of being as a substance. For instance, Aristotle resumes book Z by saying that *ousia* (substance, being) means the essence (*to ti en einai*: being something which has been) and the

²⁵ Aristotle, *Met. E*, 1, a 1026 a 24–32.

²⁶ Edmund Husserl, *Erste Philosophie* (1923/24). *Erster Teil. Kritische Ideengeschichte. Husserliana VII*. Herausgegeben von Rudolf Boehm. The Hague: Nijhoff 1956.), 3ff.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 50–57.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 183.

³⁰ Aristotle, *Met. Z*, 1, 1028a 10–13.

substrate (*hupokeimenon*: underlying substance) which is also a combination of *hylē*, *morfē* and *logos*.³¹

The meaning of phenomenology in its last stage is metaphysical in the strong sense when it is called transcendental phenomenology. As a first philosophy, the term "transcendental" is meant here in the broadest sense by Husserl. He says that phenomenology's motive is the *Rückfrage* to the last source (*Quelle*) of life and knowledge in itself.³² In this stage of Husserl's work the reference is to the transcendental ego as the primordial source of all knowledge. It is well known that transcendental phenomenology contains intrinsic problems because of its proper methodological premises. I do not mean here the way that reduction leads to the founding subjectivity (for example the Cartesian way of doubt), but the question is how transcendental subjectivity can grasp the constituted world or others as a movement back to the world. In other words, if phenomenology produces its own methodological problems at the same moment then it is a problem only in phenomenological scope. In phenomenology there must be something that produces these issues. But can we solve these problems methodologically; for instance, by involving dialectics (Sartre) or authenticity and fundamental ontology (Heidegger), without going too far beyond phenomenology's scope and limits?

From this background Derrida's *Le problème* claims that the questioning of origins, in a zigzag movement, implies a kind of a dialectical movement.³³ Phenomenology should not just look back to origins but should also reflect back and forwards on its own method.

³¹ *Ibid.*, H, 1, 1042a 3–33.

³² Hua VI 100–101. One of the many interpretations of the questioning back see. Paul Ricœur, "L'originnaire de la question-en-retour dans le Krisis de Husserl" in F. Laruelle, ed. *Textes pour Emmanuel Levinas*. Paris: Jean-Michel Place, 1980.

³³ About the dialectical interpretation of Husserl's thought see Jay Lampert, *Synthesis and Backward Reference in Husserl's Logical Investigations* (Dordrecht: Kluwer 1995), 28–32. Even if Husserl does not use the word "dialectical" it is often used in describing his work. However, this does not mean that we should favour a Hegelian reading of dialectics as Lampert does.

One wonders whether the *Ewige Anfänger* of phenomenological philosophy does not just start and restart from a methodological *tabula rasa* just in order to gain from phenomenology's own method. There is a strange doubling: a phenomenologist must start again but the restarting is determined by the methodological movement that itself contains the aprioristic commencement. I do not mean here that phenomenology corrects its own method and is therefore progressing like natural sciences. On the contrary, phenomenology is capable of investigating its own method. However, this ability does not mean becoming too abstract or too concrete, but doing both simultaneously in a movement of self-reflection. It neither means correcting methodological errors nor it is enough to claim that solving problems leads to interesting new problems. Technical problems remain on the eidetic level but it is superfluous to say that transcendental reflection in itself advances or moves in a Hegelian sense. On the generative level there is the teleological horizon of infinite phenomenology, but reflection there also involves a question of intersubjectivity and not just a positing of a transcendental consciousness through the transcendental reduction. Reduction means here also an effort to grasp a different kind of conceptual possibility. We could say that for Husserl this reflection does not seem just to be a shift to some other difficulties – for example to intersubjectivity – but advancing a new mode of methodology that also intertwines with already opened phenomenological questions.³⁴ Therefore Derrida is quite clear in his 1990 preface to *Le problème* when he concludes with the problem that dialectics, insistence on original dialectics and the associated problems have meant that we should (*fallait*) think then about the *différance*, the trace and, the supplement.³⁵ In the fifties “dialectic” seemed to be one of the key concepts in French thought and Derrida writes some ten years later about the remorse over

³⁴ I mean here the problem of Husserl's working method; he rarely looked back to his manuscripts (or history of philosophy) but got back to the drawing-board again and again. I refer here to the work of Juha Himanka.

³⁵ P VII. See also David Giovannangeli, *La passion de l'origine* (Paris: Galilée 1995), 105–120 and Marianne Hobson, *Jacques Derrida, Opening lines* (London: Routledge 1988), 56.

using the concept of dialectics, referring to another notion of dialectics and giving a hint about his essay on Antonin Artaud.

For if one appropriately conceives the *horizon* of dialectics – outside a conventional Hegelianism – one understands, perhaps, that dialectics is the indefinite movement of finitude, of the unity of the life and death, of difference, of original repetition, that is, of the origin of tragedy as the absence of a simple origin. In this sense, dialectics is tragedy, the only possible affirmation to be made against the philosophical of Christian idea of pure origin, against “the spirit of beginnings” [...].³⁶

Since the question of origins remains in the work of Derrida although the notion of dialectics was quickly abandoned, we must not overstress what Derrida writes about dialectics. The inquiry of the *archē* is not fulfilled but rethought. Obviously, the notion of *différance* was first used as differing/deferring in Derrida’s *Introduction to Husserl’s Origin of Geometry* as the originary presence in the movement of retention and protention. Since the primary impression or the living present as an origin must contain in itself the retention and the protention as such, they already differ and are at the same time kept open.³⁷

³⁶ Jacques Derrida, *L’écriture et la différence*. Paris: Seuil 1967, 264. ET= *Writing and the Difference*. Trans. by Alan Bass. London: Routledge 1978, 248. Hereafter ED/WD.

³⁷ Jacques Derrida, “Introduction” in Edmund Husserl, *L’origine de la géométrie*. (Paris: PUF 1974.). ET = *Edmund Husserl’s Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*. Translated by John P. Leavey, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 1978. I cite one of the most famous formulations: “The impossibility of resting in the simple maintenance [nowness] of a Living present, the sole and absolutely absolute origin [...]. The Primordial Difference of the absolute Origin, which can and indefinitely must both retain and announce its pure concrete form with apriori security: i.e. the beyond or the this-side which gives sense to all empirical genius and factual profusion, that is perhaps what has always been said under the concept of “transcendental” through the enigmatic history of its displacements. Difference would be transcendental.” (Derrida 1974, 171/ET 153)

2. Is Origin the Question? Four Notions of Origin in Phenomenology

Derrida's first published paper "*Genèse et structure*" et la *phénoménologie* uses the notions of genesis and structure in quotation marks. This could be thought of as phenomenological parentheses or bracketing and as distancing of the implicit thematics of the structure.³⁸ Derrida thinks that Husserl would say that thinking of the structure depends on one's intention, and that "There are some givens which must be described in the terms of structure, and others which must be described in terms of genesis".³⁹ Derrida describes Husserl's attitude and also defines the notions of genesis and structure.

Husserl, thus, ceaselessly attempts to reconcile the *structuralistic* demand (which leads to the comprehensive description of a totality, of a form of a function organized according to an internal legality in which the elements have meaning only in the solidarity of their correlation or their opposition), with the *genetic* demand (that is the search for the origin and foundation of the structure). One could show, perhaps, that the phenomenological project itself is born of an initial failure of this attempt.⁴⁰

Thus, if according to Derrida the phenomenological project is both the failure of structuralistic and genetic attempts to secure a teleology, this does not mean that one must not use these terms in describing phenomenology. Quite the contrary; phenomenology could be demonstrated through first such attempts.⁴¹ This is put to work in Derrida's later critique of structuralism, as in *Force and Signification*, where the structure is always considered in relation to

³⁸ The article was announced in *Cerisy la Salle* and published in *Genèse et structure* directed by Gandillac, Piaget and Goldmann. Obviously there is an allusion to Jean Hyppolite's commentary *Origin and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*.

³⁹ ED 230/WD 155.

⁴⁰ ED 233/WD 157.

⁴¹ About the context of this seminar see Costa (1996). According to Costa, Derrida was then considered as a phenomenologist and not a structuralist. (1996, 28–45)

the telos.⁴² It is useful to read *Le problème* considering the limits of these terms, structure and origin. For example, Vincenzo Costa arranges these terms in this way in his valuable book *La generazione della forma. La fenomenologia e il problema della genesi in Husserl e in Derrida* (1996).⁴³

In *Le problème* Derrida begins to question primal instituting an origin (*originarite d'un fondement*) of sense or the being of genesis. This is considered in the terrain of Kantian *a priori* synthesis, because all synthesis is fundamentally *a priori*.⁴⁴ The result is that there are certain distinctions *a priori/a posteriori* in Husserl's phenomenology, such as transcendental and mundane, even if Husserl does not accept the Kantian distinction.

Derrida finds at least four concepts of genesis in *Le problème* (1) psychological genesis (2) neutralised genesis (3) transcendental genesis (4) mundane genesis. These are organised in the chronological order of Husserl's work. Derrida sees the problems of genesis throughout Husserl's thought; it has been a theme from the early *Habilitationsschrift Philosophy of Arithmetic* to *The Origin of Geometry*, spanning fifty years of philosophy. This does not mean that genesis is the origin of phenomenology but that what is not phenomenology is the origin – just as Derrida says that the antipsychologism of

⁴² ED 45–46/WD 27: "That modern structuralism has grown and developed within a more or less direct and avowed dependence upon phenomenology suffices to make it a tributary of the most purely traditional stream of Western philosophy, which above and beyond its anti-Platonism, leads Husserl back to Plato. / -- / Hence the difficulties in thinking the genesis and pure temporality of the transcendental ego, of accounting for the successful or unsuccessful incarnation of *telos*, and the mysterious failure called crises. And when, in certain place, Husserl ceases to consider the phenomena of crisis and the failure of *telos* as "accidents of genesis," or as the *inessential* (*Unwesen*), it is in order to demonstrate that forgetting is eidetically dictated, and is necessary, under the rubric of "sedimentation," for the development of truth. For the revealing and illumination of truth."

⁴³ This seems to be the first full length study on Derrida's *Le problème*. Costa has also translated *Le problème* into Italian in 1992. I thank Dan Zahavi for drawing Costa's study to my attention.

⁴⁴ P 12.

Logical Investigations leads to the core of phenomenology, as psychologism. If Husserl never conceives the origin of phenomenology in a phenomenological way, it must then be beyond its scope, limits and aims. Derrida starts with the claim that the problem of genesis is that which Husserl always starts with, but there is no connection between these notions of origin. The first origin is "empirical and psychological" although the numbers and the elementary logical concepts are made possible by the aprioristic objectivity of an object in general.⁴⁵ The pure and the apriorical essences thus constitute the structure of the intentional consciousness, while the other origins (natural sciences, psychology, biology) remain weak compared to rigorous and aprioristic science.⁴⁶ First Husserl invents the method of phenomenological reduction, by which genesis is reduced or put in parentheses: here we gain the original synthesis as producing apriorical essences in time. This leads to the problem of the constituting consciousness where the transcendental ego not merely constitutes but is in itself constituted as in an originary synthesis that involves the questions of genesis (and not transcendental idealism). Husserl thus considers (time and being are hard to reduce) the transcendental genesis, at which point we are back in touch with the *Lebenswelt*, the pre-predicative and primitive world and therefore the constituted transcendental intersubjectivity as well. Derrida says that in Husserl's work there is an oscillation between the *Lifeworld* and transcendental ego and logic in an infinite totality. The genesis of a meaning is an apriorical passive phenomenological origin but origin in intentional-history is preceded by the origin of meaning before historical genesis.⁴⁷ In keeping the phenomenological method pure (time and space are a priori synthetic as a foundation for genesis and all signification) the method must be closed (not open) for the transcendental reduction.⁴⁸

Derrida examines Husserl in *Le problème* in a strictly chronological way, not synchronic as in his later writings – the argument is

⁴⁵ P 1–5, 7–9.

⁴⁶ P 35–36.

⁴⁷ P 38–39.

⁴⁸ P 41.

based on close reading of certain *topoi* in Husserl's works. There is a narrative in progress from *Philosophy of Arithmetic* to *Logical Investigations* and then to *Ideas*; noting *Internal Time-Consciousness, Experience and Judgement* and *The Cartesian Meditations*. Derrida finally gives an account of the Husserl of *Crisis*. Can we say that the originary synthesis and the notion of the passivity direct the discussion?

2.1. The Chronology

Derrida reads short sections that guide us in interpreting Husserl – we read a little Husserl with him. The last phase of Husserl's work then seemed the most interesting part of his writings,⁴⁹ as it seems in the light of *Krisis* 2⁵⁰ and the writings about intersubjectivity. This development from the origins of numbers to historical origins is felt in books like *Des mathématiques à la l'histoire* some 30 years later.⁵¹

Beside the other interesting phenomenological subject which is temporality, the second part of Derrida's book concerns noematic and genetic temporality in the context of Husserl's 1905 lectures on internal time consciousness. It also copes with the *epoché* and genetic studies of Husserl's *Ideas I* and the temporality and noematicity (this is the largest section in the work). *Epoché* is here considered as a methodology for the theory of perception. It is based on what has been introduced in *Logical Investigations* though several distinctions concerning perception (the form/ the content of perception) and the intentional structures (the noematic/the noema, act/form, object/content) and *hylē/morphē*. This leads to idealism and seeing as *eidetic*, which Husserl is often accused of.

In the third part of *Le problème* Derrida resumes the discussion of the genesis of a judgement and derivation (*devenir*) as in *Erfahrung*

⁴⁹ I refer here also to Walter Biemel's "Die Entscheidenden Phasen der Entfaltung von Husserls philosophie", *ZPF* 13, 1959.

⁵⁰ I mean by *Krisis* 2 volume XXVII of *Husserliana*.

⁵¹ Françoise Dastur, *Husserl. Des mathématiques à l'histoire*, (Paris: PUF 1995).

und Urteil (1938),⁵² where the materiality of perception in pre-predication is the possibility of a higher level of judgement or predication in the objective consciousness. Of course Husserl asks here about the origin of logic, as logical means the predicative level and not the level of the primordial constitution of *Leib*.⁵³ This leads to the problems of the *Cartesian meditations* and of transcendental subjectivity as intersubjectivity. Because intersubjectivity is a continuing theme here, let us take a closer look at it later.

In the fourth part Derrida pays attention to Husserl's Vienna lecture (*The Crisis in Philosophy and European Humanity*) and not *Krisis in Husserliana*, which was published later.⁵⁴ These are the themes that Derrida was to become known for. He considers Husserl's *The Origin of Geometry* in thinking about the quest of philosophy as the re-activation of genesis. This leads to the problem of limited genesis and telos: his conclusion about Husserl's philosophy in the terms of transcendental history (the history of philosophy and the transcendental motive), where these distinctions cast shadows on Husserl's work and the whole history of philosophy if we theorise from the phenomenological point of view. The possibility of transcendental history is the possibility of empirical history and history is not bound to what is derived from it.

2.2. The Introduction and Conclusion of *Le Problème*

We focus here mainly on the introduction and the conclusion of *Le problème*. Derrida starts with the the problem of origin as the necessary signification of the philosophy of history and the history of philosophy.⁵⁵ The book concludes that philosophy is an endless task a) the meaning of philosophy is constituted on a teleological horizon

⁵² Husserl 1983.

⁵³ Hua IV for these themes of the phenomenological body and for a current commentary, see Heinämaa 1999.

⁵⁴ Neither does Derrida refer to *The Formal and The Transcendental Logic*: it was translated in to French in 1956 by Suzanne Bachelard, whose assistant he was.

⁵⁵ P 1.

b) this meaning is always reproducible and is always rupturing. According to Derrida, Husserl repeats all philosophical and historical movements of genesis. These hesitations and sidesteps constitute the end of philosophy. Since the origin of structures is configured by a teleology, this teleology remains beyond transcendental reduction. The original synthesis and *existentiell* of the transcendental subject remains hidden, secret and concealed (*dissimulée*).⁵⁶

In the introduction, the genesis (the content of consciousness) of philosophy in intentional consciousness is thought as of the horizon of the phenomenological meaning of history. The problem therefore is that transcendental consciousness reduces genetic history in its mundane sense. The original synthesis gives meaning to genesis as an *a priori* synthetic.⁵⁷

The next chapter is on dialectics and dualism, where these dualisms are not to be resolved or decided by naïve dialectics, because in advancing a phenomenological science the oppositions should not be left simply to be made clear in the future. This was one of the problems of Derrida's early work. The elucidation of the various meanings of genesis (with the notions of being and time) takes place because creation (or invention) is directed to the future but is constituted in the past: the transcendental ego is always present as a mode of presencing. This is the problem of apriorism: in the Kantian mode the empirical is excluded but in Husserl the apriorical and empirical exist at the same time. For Husserl – expressed in a classical way – the possibility of absolute *a priori* institutes the empirical and the method must therefore lead us to empiricism. For example, Hegel says that these empirical genetic structures are constructions. For Husserl these unreal structures are constructions in a mathematical sense. Derrida asks whether they are not always already constructed and elaborates them as the

⁵⁶ P 282–283.

⁵⁷ On the notion of synthesis in general in Husserl's work see Jay Lampert *Synthesis and Backward Reference in Husserl's Logical Investigations* (Dordrecht: Kluwer 1995) 1–37. Derrida's account in *Speech and Phenomena* about the origin of meaning Lampert calls a "perfection of phenomenology instead of critique" (1995, 36).

oppositions of activity and passivity, asking the crucial question of whether one finds at one stroke the meaning of the ontological and the possibility of a meaning in the sense of an absolute dialectic between the dialectical and the non-dialectical. A typical Husserlian distinction is posed between these two incomplete methods where the first one analytically seeks the notion of origin and seeks it methodologically in the transcendental field. The second one is the synthetic view that considers the possibility of re-activating genesis.⁵⁸ This is not considered with time-consciousness (the difference as such between the modes of retention, protention and nowness) as is done in *The Origin of Geometry*.⁵⁹ Derrida asks for the original acts (*Leistungen*) that refer to producing and also (in *Tel Quel* terminology) to producing writing (*pro-ducere*).⁶⁰

The problems of the constitution of time are solved by the dialectics of retention-protention (the constitution of intentionality as a becoming, protention (lat. *tando*). The problem of a genetic origin (the historical origin) then also moves to the problem of the transcendental origins – the transcendental would be impossible without prepredicative constitution.⁶¹ Derrida says of transcendental origin that existence would be at the heart of the transcendental ego: “if the form of time or existence is at the core of the transcendental ego, then the mundane origin or simple existence is invested in meaning of the transcendental act or transcendental genesis where existence again gives sense to itself (“*se*” *donne sens*).⁶² Derrida formulates it thus: the original (*originaire*) beginnings seems to be more primitive (*primitif*) than primitive (elementary, *primitif*), to which it gives the most original sense, although the elementary (*primitif*) is more

⁵⁸ P 22.

⁵⁹ This is the famous *locus*: “The Living Present has the irreducible originality of a Now, the ground of a Here, only if it retains (in order to be distinguishable from it) the past Now *as such*, i.e., as the past present of an absolute origin, instead of purely and simply succeeding it in an objective time. But this retention will not be possible without a protention [...]” Derrida 1974, 149/ET 136–137.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 22, note 3/40, note 27.

⁶¹ P 28.

⁶² P 30.

original than (*plus originaire*) than the originary (*originaire*) because it is at the same time the instituting (*fondement*) of the transcendental and the most ultimate substrate of meaning (*ultime substrat du sens*).⁶³ The primally instituting (*urstiftende*) in *The Origin of Geometry* means *fondement originaire*.⁶⁴

Derrida elucidates the problem of the method. The philosophy of Husserl is exemplary, but Derrida uses the method phenomenologically; it is a pre-text and not the end of the philosophy or research.⁶⁵ Derrida maintains that these dialectical solutions to the paradoxes of Husserl's philosophy do not remain faithful to it in getting to the most elementary generalities.⁶⁶ Derrida makes a critique of Tran Duc Thao who, after distinguishing the possibility of the pure transcendental dialectics, buries these difficulties in mundane dialectical materialism.⁶⁷ Derrida affirms the openness of these problems and insists that they are not to be solved, but that the aporia must understand itself as an aporia. What is contradictory remains open: there is no solution to these "Derridean dialectics".

The last chapter of *Le problème* seems to speak about the same notions as the *Introduction to Husserl's Origin of Geometry*. Derrida asks whether the infinite idea of philosophy (*ratio*) is invented in "European humanity", that the idea of phenomenology that existed before European Man – how could he be such a late comer. Derrida is thinking about philosophy's self-alienation, since the condition of this progress is alienation. Thus we have the problem of forgetting the origin or the moment of crisis. Only the original synthesis and backward constituting reveals the crisis. In Derridean language there is an ideal of one philosophy – the well-formed (or well-determined) ideal of a universal philosophy which is teleological and which would therefore be the methodology for the way of beginning and

⁶³ P 31.

⁶⁴ P 261. Reference is to *Hua VI*, 365–366.

⁶⁵ P 31–32.

⁶⁶ In the sense that Rodolphe Gasché says in his *The Tain of the Mirror* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard 1986) that Derrida continues the project of the "pure logical grammar" of the *Logical Investigations* (245ff.).

⁶⁷ P 32. Cf. Tran Duc Thao, *Phenomenology and Dialectical Materialism*, translated by D.J. Herman and D.J. Morano. (Dordrecht: Reidel 1986).

instituting modern philosophy.⁶⁸ According to Derrida the crisis is necessary to philosophy because forgetting is the possibility of this return:⁶⁹ the possibility of a transcendental generativity makes alienation possible, and the living present is lived in a constituted past. Phenomenology is based on naïve objectivism and psychologism. The crisis also means going backwards and “questioning back” (*Rückfrage*) to origins, going through the crises to the origin.⁷⁰

Derrida makes a note about the meaning of transcendentalism and then says that the Husserlian disinterestedness in the history of philosophy gets its meaning only from the horizon of the telos of philosophy.⁷¹ The philosophy of consciousness and objectivism should thus give way to the original and the final transcendental eidōs that means passing to the transcendental subjectivity in which the final teleology of philosophy acquires its last form as phenomenology.⁷²

Derrida repeats the fictive “exemplary index” of Galileo, who was apodeictically naïve, establishing geometry: in inventing physics he also concealed Nature (trusting the laws of nature and causality) in discovering laws of nature. Hume was the first to be radical as a phenomenologist and not as a scientist like Galileo and Descartes. Kant tried to respond to Hume by inventing the transcendental subjective consciousness that produces objective science.

⁶⁸ P 274.

⁶⁹ On the notion of crisis and responsibility towards it see R. Philip Buckley, *Husserl, Heidegger and the Crisis of Philosophical Responsibility* (Dordrecht: Kluwer 1992) and especially about Derrida’s account 247–257 and 271–274. Buckley reminds us that crisis is not a homogenic notion and it is not easy to say who is a crisis-thinker – who is competent to speak about crises. For a complete misunderstanding of Derrida’s position see Gary Steiner, “‘This project is mad’: Descartes, Derrida and the notion of philosophical crises”, *Man and World* 30, 1997, 179–198 which states: “Derrida’s conceptions of reason and crisis end up appearing troublingly irrelevant – or, more accurately, impotent in the face of concrete human need (182).” For a response to interpretations of this kind see Richard Beardsworth, *Derrida and the Political* (London: Routledge 1996) 47ff.

⁷⁰ See Buckley 1992, 41.

⁷¹ P 275–276.

⁷² P 277.

According to Derrida, although for Husserl the history of philosophy is not a story (*histoire*) and although these analyses are eidetic, they are poor and formalistic compared to the rigorousness of phenomenology. The original sense of the history of philosophy as an introduction to the history of philosophy institutes phenomenology but is no richer than the existing philosophy. The measure of philosophy is the infinite task of philosophy, so that the idea of philosophy can not be sketched as a noema.⁷³

A) The meaning of philosophy is constituted on a teleological horizon; B) It is always possible to repeat the meaning of philosophy and, in the same manner, rupture is always possible. Husserl repeats the genealogical movements in history and philosophy – phenomenology surpasses all preceding thought as “a Husserlian story of philosophy” although Husserl himself was very sceptical of such histories. The critique of all antihistoricism is that possible scepticism of the history of philosophy (positivism) is possible only with philosophy’s already constituted history.⁷⁴ This means beginning again (like a child) as Husserl writes on his deathbed to his sister Adelgründis Jägerschmid.⁷⁵ Now, childhood must also be thought of as a phenomenological childhood – a phenomenologist is always a

⁷³ P 281.

⁷⁴ Rudolf Boehm, “Le sensible et l’insensible” in *Phénoménologie et politique. Mélanges offerts à Jacques Taminiaux* (Ousia: Bruxelles 1989) refers to Husserl’s hostility against scepticism and relativism. Boehm sees Husserl himself as near the position of a relativist and thinks that Derrida is continuing this on road (see 143, 153–154). Of course, Husserlian phenomenology fights against scepticism, but Boehm also sees the non-relative structure of relativism as a possibility for absolute relativism; i.e. non-objectivism. If scepticism is constituted in philosophy of history, especially in *Krisis I*, the “truth of things” or undecidability is on as different level to the “absolute undecidable”, or the possibility of objectivity in itself. For more about the subject, see Gaily Soffer, *Husserl and the Problem of Relativism* (Dordrecht: Kluwer 1991).

⁷⁵ See Beck (1993, 54) who discusses Bataille’s reference to this letter in “Le non-savoir, 1953, O.C., XII”. See also P 283 concerning the same letter, to which Derrida ends *Le problème*. It is cited from M. W. Biemel, “Introduction à La philosophie comme prise de conscience de l’humanité”, *Deucalion, Vérité et Liberté*, 3, p. 113, 1950.

child and a beginner. Thus he is supposed to be “a phenomenological child (*Kind*)” who lives a second childhood after the phenomenological reduction.⁷⁶

According to Derrida, Husserl, in introducing phenomenology for everyone and in a certain history, falls back on empiricism and his metaphors are empirical (e.g. Living World) and technical like “axiomatics” and “geometry as calculus” (concerning writing and geometry). In a Kantian way Husserl remains an empiricist because he does not make these distinctions: the possibility of an ideal objectivity is at the same time aprioristic and empiristic (technical). Derrida asks whether it would be possible to start from an aprioristic ontology of dialectics of being and time (as a limit) and from a non-phenomenological level where the origin of apriority and the apriority of the origin are pre-conceived. For Husserl, since the reason is concealed in history and should be revealed, one must ask about the meaning of history and its rationality.⁷⁷ Husserl mixes the philosophy of history with the history of philosophy again when it is a question of the *animal rationale*.⁷⁸

3. The Notion of Origin and Passivity in Phenomenology

Since the notion of origins is our theme or quest here, we must consider it more closely. As Husserl seems to accept this notion without questioning it, one may also suspect that Heidegger, as a

⁷⁶ Hua VII, 123.

⁷⁷ Soffer (1991) defends both the absolutism and a narrow concept of relativism in Husserl. According to Soffer there are relative *Lebenswelt* in Husserl's later manuscripts and the same is found in his published works – if the truth were conceivable only in European culture it would not be universal (1991, 88–191). This also means that it is a misinterpretation to underline the teleological concept of reason. I find it more interesting to defend the teleological argument.

⁷⁸ For Husserl the term “animal rationale” means that active rationality overpasses the passive animality (Buckley 1995, 136–137). This passivity is of course an instant of crises as well as the attitude of school philosophy. On the question of animal and animality in Husserl, see Depraz 1995.

subtle thinker about origins, would take the concept from Husserl to the point of no longer belonging to phenomenological questioning of origins. Of course this is not say that Husserl naïvely regards all modes of consciousness as simple representations to the consciousness or thinks we should surpass this way of thinking.

Martin Heidegger explains in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* that the phenomenological method has three parts or components: phenomenological reduction, phenomenological destruction, and phenomenological construction.⁷⁹ This well-known explanation also suggests the difference between the Husserlian and Heideggerian phenomenological method and the Heideggerian deconstruction before the Derridean “deconstruction of Western metaphysics”. Heidegger says that

Construction in philosophy is necessarily destruction, that is to say, a de-construction of traditional concepts carried out in a historical recursion to the tradition.⁸⁰

I contend that Heidegger’s assertions are to be understood more in a Husserlian context since volume two of the *Ideas* was one of the targets in *Being and Time*.⁸¹ If the world is not “immanent” for Husserl in *Ideas II*, as Heidegger thought in the twenties, but there are already-constituted phenomena, like the other, could we contemplate phenomenology not just in an immanent way but also historically? The phenomenological language of course incorporates the problem of the genesis of concepts and phenomenological history, since it is the historical construction of a certain knowledge of concepts that arises with the problem of intersubjectivity. Perhaps it is sometimes difficult to say whether there is really an improvement in using a Heideggerian language instead of a phenomenological “jargon”.

⁷⁹ Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, (Bloomington: Indiana UP) 1988, 23 (orig. 21).

⁸⁰ Heidegger *ibid.* Usually this is read in contrast to the notion of destruction of SZ § 6.

⁸¹ Bernet (1994, 100–103) for example compares the analyses of the World (Hua IV, §§ 50–51) to the Heideggerian everydayness where *Dasein* is absorbed in being-at-hand, etc.

3.1. Static and Genetic Method: The Three Ways of Origin

We can say in Heideggerian language that, for example, if Husserl affirms in *The Origin of Geometry* that Galileo was not a proto-geometrician, this means that the invention of geometry happens on the level of facticity.⁸² The Husserlian attempt to understand genesis could also be expressed methodologically. In *Statische und Genetische Methode*⁸³, he accordingly develops a threefold methodology: (1.) In active genesis, the ego produces; (2.) In active and passive genesis the origin of active genesis is passive, as a *Rückfrage*; and (3.) Passive genesis exists, in the sense of a transcendental aesthetics and pure passivity, as a primordial constitution.⁸⁴ Of course, in the static (eidetic) and genetic (intersubjective) analyses there is some kind of overlapping or binding (*zusammenhang*) as in the noematic-noetic correlation – but Husserl typically sees this as a teleological question.⁸⁵ The distinction between static and genetic is also in itself a structural distinction and therefore static.⁸⁶ This seems to correspond to the multiplicity of structure and genesis, even if one accepts that facticity means generativity.

In *Le Problème*, the static constitution for Husserl seems to correspond with the active. Derrida points to the passivity of genesis which resists analysis. Although the non-intentional *hylē* of consciousness is not temporal, genesis holds the original temporality at

⁸² Facticity is a term borrowed from Steinbock (1995), but Husserl also seems to use the term.

⁸³ *Husserliana XI*, The Hague: Nijhoff 1966, 336–345.

⁸⁴ I follow Steinbock's analysis (1995, 41–42); in fact Husserl numbers ten points about the origin but the three first are enough here (*Hua XI*, 242–243).

⁸⁵ *Hua XI*, 344.

⁸⁶ See Steinbock 1995, 35–40 on the distinction between static and genetic and also of literature about generativity (1995, 276). Steinbock says that the generative phenomena correspond to the genetic dimension and points out that the term generativity is better than facticity (*ibid.*, 36). Derrida (P 242) refers to the difficulty about this distinction in *Manuscript D 12* on kinesthetic.

the same moment.⁸⁷ This is why static analyses are “insufficient” where the spatiality of *hylē* does not need temporality or a temporal foundation in its constitution.⁸⁸

Husserl does not say much about the notion of an origin in itself. But in the paper *Über Ursprung (Die reine Psychologie und die Aufgabe einer Ursprungsklärung unserer Ideen (1930))* he speaks about the origin of our ideas, which for him are thematic questions concerning the origin of general objectivity (*Ursprung der allgemeinen Gegenstand*).⁸⁹ He conceives them traditionally, starting from Locke and empiricism, in the forms of traditional psychology, theory of knowledge and psychology of knowledge (*Erkenntnispsychologie*).⁹⁰ This is an example of active genesis.

The interaction between active and passive is a question of going backward and forward.⁹¹ In *Crisis*,⁹² Husserl speaks about the infinite task (*une tâche infinie*) of philosophy, *theoria*.⁹³ He introduces the idea of the *question en retour*, *Rückfrage*, inquiring backwards in

⁸⁷ Aguirre (1970, 158–173) calls this non-differentiated genesis and beginning, an absolute beginning that also means final grounding (*letztbegründung*).

⁸⁸ P 159–164.

⁸⁹ Hua XXVII, 132.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ See to Lampert 1995 (33–37, 109–124, 182–195) where the backwards going (*zurückgehen*, *Rückgang*) has also the meaning of “backward reference” (*zurückweisen*). There is vocabulary of the backwards looking in Husserl, although methodologically speaking these back-and forward looking steps are an analysis of moments in synthesis. Husserl’s account means the possibility of synthesis in temporal constitution of a starting point for backwards looking. Husserl speaks (Lampert 1995, 196–204) later in *Ideas* about backward reference (*Rückbeziehung*) and drawing back (*zurückziehen*). For an analytic, semantic and propositional account of backward reference one might see Esa Saarinen, *Backwards-Looking operators in intensional logic and in philosophical analysis. A Summary*. (Reports from the Department of Philosophy, University of Helsinki, No.7. 1977).

⁹² The Conference of Vienna (Hua VI, 314–348), P 241, 247.

⁹³ P 259.

*The Origin of Geometry*⁹⁴ as well as in *Crisis*.⁹⁵ The infinite task also involves the movement of going backwards and not just the famous examples ("I must go on" and "*und so weiter*") of going forward.

Von dem, was wir wissen, von unserer Geometrie bzw. von dem tradierten älteren Gestalten (*origines primordiales de la geometrise*) aus (wie der Euklidischen Geometrie), gibt es eine Rückfrage (*réflexion*) nach den versunkenen ursprüngliche Anfängen der Geometrie, wie sie als "urstiftende" (*fondements originaires*) notwendig gewesen sein müssen.⁹⁶

This is not a new idea, because Fink's preface (to the first publication of the *Origin*) notes the possibility of the transcendental logic investigating its own foundations.⁹⁷ Derrida formulates this at a stroke:

Il s'agit donc, une fois de plus, d'une recherche du sens originaire par la méthode de la réduction transcendantale; réduction qui n'a plus un sens simplement égologique, mais se pratique à partir d'une communauté transcendantale. La facticité constituée de l'histoire étant "neutralisée", on laisse apparaître l'acte même de la production du sens à partir d'une subjectivité transcendantale. Du même coup, cette opération mettra à nu les fondements transcendantsaux de la géométrie.⁹⁸

For Husserl the zigzagging means going forwards and backwards (*wir müssen im "Zickzack" vor -und zurückgehen*).⁹⁹ The sense of backward reflexion (*Rückbesinnung*) also involves the demand for deep ethical self reflexion (*Selbstbesinnung*) as self-understanding.¹⁰⁰ The Husserlian teleological responsibility is to the *Logos* and the Truth, as an *Endstiftung*. For Husserl the ethical is phenomenology's self-responsibility (*selbstverantwortung*) at the level of constituting

⁹⁴ Hua VI, 366.

⁹⁵ Hua VI, 72.

⁹⁶ Hua VI, 365–366, P 261. Derrida's translations included.

⁹⁷ P 260. Derrida refers to Fink's introduction to the first publication of *The Origin* in 1939.

⁹⁸ P 261–262.

⁹⁹ Hua VI, 59.

¹⁰⁰ Hua VI, 73.

the producing intersubjectivity.¹⁰¹ The ethical means social ethics, and normative, not just individual ethics.¹⁰² This means that the teleological movement (as progress, *Erneuerung* or *Entwicklung*) leads to the ethical *Gemeinschaft*.¹⁰³ Since the phenomenological project is thus intersubjective and ethical, inquiring into origins seems to be not merely formal but an ethical question.

There is finally the possibility of culture as the aprioristic condition and the reactivation of genesis. The zigzag movement means here a static movement in terms of the eidetic level of the noematic constitution of ideal objectivities, *Gegenständlichkeiten* which are the objects of science.¹⁰⁴ The movement in the noematico-noietic correlation is founded on a genetic level as an originary passivity. At the thematic level, the constitution of geometry in its quest for its origin is postgenetic (supplementary origin).

This not the place to consider the notion of the supplement and supplementariness from *Of Grammatology*; instead we mention the conceptuality of the origin itself. The third mode of genesis, passive genesis, is in question here. The study of the Husserlian notion of passive synthesis – as it is put in *Analysen zur passiven Synthesis*¹⁰⁵ – suggests that it could even be shown that the Derridean concepts of arche-synthesis and the constitutive operation of *différance* and the

¹⁰¹ For example, see Georg Römpp, *Husserls Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Und ihre Bedeutung für eine Theorie intersubjektiver Objektivität und die Konzeption einer Phänomenologischen Philosophie*. (Dordrecht: Kluwer 1992), 206–216.

¹⁰² Edmund Husserl, *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922–1937)*. Husserliana XXVII. Kluwer: Dordrecht, 1989, 21. (The second *Kaizo*-article).

¹⁰³ Hua XXVII, 50–56.

¹⁰⁴ Buckley (1995, 245 ff.) underlines that the notion of crisis in Husserl means only questioning back the origin of (natural) sciences and just fundamental sciences. In Heidegger the notion of crisis is broader and means philosophy or the forgetting of Being; this is due to the different concepts of science and its objectivity in Husserl and Heidegger. Nevertheless, the basic motive is the same – if we think of sciences as knowing (*Wissen*).

¹⁰⁵ Hua XI, 117ff.

trace are a development of the Husserlian analysis of passivity.¹⁰⁶ The Derridean notion of writing without intentionality becomes a passivity near to what Husserl claims for language.¹⁰⁷ The Derridean notions of arche-trace and arche-synthesis are thus to be interpreted as a passive synthesis.

Here the appearing and functioning of difference presupposes an originary synthesis not preceded by any absolute simplicity. Such would be the originary trace. Without a retention in the minimal unit of temporal experience, without a trace retaining the other as other in the same, no difference would do its work and no meaning would appear.¹⁰⁸

According to Husserl, the most general synthesis would be originary passive¹⁰⁹ and he refers to Kant's theory of three syntheses in the first edition of the *First Critique*.¹¹⁰ For Husserl there are the three moments (primary impression, retention and protention) in the passive synthesis. Derrida's problem is the identity of the primary impression that must keep the retentionality in itself. Does the retention as a genesis remain itself (or the same) in the originary synthesis in the moment of *Urimpression*? Derrida does at least say that this generality, this retentionality in itself, called as a trace ("the (pure) trace is difference"¹¹¹) is originally passive before higher levels of passivity and activity. The passivity of the trace and the

¹⁰⁶ See Costa 1996, 77–79. Giovannangeli (1995, 109–115) notes this development of passivity in Derrida where *hylē* in noematic-noetic analysis must be passive. Could *urhylē* also be the origin of alter ego as Derrida states? Giovannangeli asks: "Faut il dire que Derrida consent à la passivité husserlienne plus que Husserl ne lui accorde explicitement?" (1995, 114–115; the reference is to P 239–240).

¹⁰⁷ Costa 1996, 173–177; Costa refers at 174–175 to Husserl Ms A VI 26/73a–73b concerning involuntarity.

¹⁰⁸ Jacques Derrida, *De la grammatologie* (Paris: Minuit 1967), 92. ET = *Of Grammatology*, 62. Trans. Gayatri Spivak. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP 1976). Hereafter DG/OG.

¹⁰⁹ Hua XI, 127.

¹¹⁰ Hua XI 125. See also Lampert 1995, 7–12 on Husserl's theory – at least in *LU* – of synthesis in contrast to other models of synthesis.

¹¹¹ DG 92/OG 62.

origin leads to the notion of writing where the origin of the signs is pure passivity and the possibility of constitution always remains passive. Even speech is passive in the transcendental sense according to Derrida. This passivity also opens the possibility of an absolute past as an impossibility. There is no complete re-activation of the sense or of the origin.

That the "imprint" is irreducible means also that speech is originally passive, but in a sense passivity that all intramundane metaphors would only betray. This passivity is also the relationship to a past, to an always-already-there that no reactivation of the origin could fully master and awaken to a presence. This impossibility of re-animating absolutely the manifest evidence of an originary presence refers us therefore to an absolute past. That is what authorized us to call *trace* that which does not let itself be summed up in the simplicity of a present.¹¹²

3.2. Historicity or the Genesis of the Origin

For Husserl it is a question of *Ur-sprung*, a "primary leap" and not just a beginning. But the work of Reiner Schürmann provides another source for the notion of origin and *Archē*. Schürmann makes a historical analysis of the notion of origins. His analysis is concerned with the Heideggerian notion of origin, and he even says of Heidegger that the notion of origin was the question for him¹¹³ – and one simply wonders, how the quest for the origin seems to be so important but also impenetrable for Husserl, Heidegger and Derrida.¹¹⁴ Schürmann also makes a genealogical reading of the concept

¹¹² DG 97/OG 66.

¹¹³ Reiner Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy*. (Bloomington: Indiana UP 1990.) "To say *Anfang* and *Ursprung* instead of *archē* or *principium* is to abolish the patterns and rule that accompany the Classical Greek and Latin representations of origin. Heidegger's writings may be read in their entirety as a quest for the origin. They can never be read, however, as a quest for a *fons et origo*, a mythical source for all things. The word *Ursprung*, (literally "primal leap") recurs at each stage of his itinerary. (1990, 120)

¹¹⁴ See also Ruin 1995, 35ff. on the concept of beginning and origin.

of *Archē* and origin.¹¹⁵ Schürmann's *From Principles to Anarchy* provides a phenomenology of origins although he differentiates the notions of beginning, starting and origin. The most important of the three possible terms for origin is *Ursprung*, origin or originating, which comes to mean the event of an appropriation. Schürmann continues:

To conclude this survey of vocabulary and to see what issues it raises, it should be clear that the historical-epochal notion of 'beginning' (*Beginn*) with its overdetermination of event, and the experimental-destinal notion of 'inception' (*Anfang*), with its ontological overdetermination, are fully intelligible only in conjunction with the notion of 'origination' (*Ursprung*), as the event proper, itself historically overdetermined.¹¹⁶

This also leads him to the distinction between origin (what is deconstructed) and originating (the new beginning, the aim of deconstruction).¹¹⁷ This even leads to a new Heideggerian phenomenology of Being, where the temporal difference is between the mode of being and the event of Being.¹¹⁸ Despite differences, this seems also to lead us back to the theory of the passive synthesis – the temporality of an event, if such an event is possible, must as a possibility be the temporal difference between retention and primary impression, even if it is without foundations, without *principium*.

The notion of origin, strangely, still seems to have the ability of the transcendental leap (*sprung*) as well as the step back to the primary (*Ur*).¹¹⁹ Marlene Zarader claims that the difference between the Derridean trace and the Heideggerian origin is that the arche-

¹¹⁵ On the reading of Aristotle (and Schürmann's interpretation of Aristotle) see Johannes Fritsche "Genus and *ti to ēn einai* (essence) in Aristotle and Socrates." *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*. Vol 19. no. 2 – Vol 20. no. 1, 1997, especially 188–191.

¹¹⁶ Schürmann 1990, 127.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 132–133.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 151.

¹¹⁹ In the *Beiträge* (1989) and in the recent *Besinnung* (1997) Heidegger has further developed the notion of the *Sprung*.

trace is more originary than the originary origin; in Heidegger the trace remains a trace in the origin.¹²⁰

4. An Excursus into Psychological Origins: Derrida's Early Interpretation of Frege and the Question of Noema

In this section I will examine some problems concerning the tradition of analytical philosophy, whose mentor is Frege. The reason for this is that the most common opposition to Derrida takes a Fregean position, without clearly stating what kind of Frege we are dealing with. The secondary reason is that the Fregean concept of formal language has sometimes similarly been described as having a family resemblance to Derridean notions.¹²¹ But all these efforts should first be put through both Husserl's theory of meaning and Derrida's few mentions of the philosophy of Frege.

Many Husserl and Frege scholars have pointed to the relation between Husserl and Frege – which we ignore for now. But it is remarkable that Derrida read Frege in relation to the Kantian tradition in the way that Frege scholars have later begun to do.¹²² There is also some evidence that Derrida has been discussing analytical philosophical points of view.¹²³

In the form of a summary Derrida starts from Husserl's *Philosophie der Arithmetik* (1882) which tried to establish the origin of mathematics (numbers) in a psychological or in Brentanian psycho-

¹²⁰ Marlene Zarader, *Heidegger et les paroles d'origine*. (Paris: Vrin 1990), 265. Zarader also makes the distinction between beginning, starting and origin, referring to Hölderlin's *Hymnen "Germanien" und "Rhein"*, GA 39 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann 1980), see Ruin 1995, 36.

¹²¹ See, for example, Hobson 1998, 88–91 for an interpretation of a Dummettian Frege that also explains the work of Derrida.

¹²² For these attempts see Haaparanta, *Frege's Doctrine of Being* (1985) 27ff. She confronts Hans Sluga's interpretation of Frege and Kant.

¹²³ We note that Derrida has reviewed J.N. Mohanty's *Edmund Husserl's Theory of Meaning* (The Hague: Nijhoff 1964) in 1964. He has also co-translated an article by W.V. Quine in the same year. See Geoffrey Bennington/Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida* (Paris: Le Seuil 1991) 332 and 336.

logical way.¹²⁴ It is well known that Frege proposed in his critique that the number zero could not be founded psychologically, but is an elementary operator in logic (set theory). Husserl's logistic approach is found in *Logical Investigations*, of which the first part is the refutation of psychologism and the second volume is more developed and presents Husserl's own theory (intentional analysis). He started first by researching the logical foundations of psychology, next the intentional foundations, and the ideal foundations (in a Neo-kantian way), and going back to "Cartesian phenomenology".

The *Philosophy of Arithmetic* raises the famous question of the origin of number. According to Derrida it involved the notion of origin as a psychological and empirical entity. For Husserl the numbers are multiplicities, but the difficulty is that the number zero could not be determined as such. Zero could not be determined as a notion because "numbers are constructed in original synthesis" (null is not an original number and necessary). After Frege's famous critique Husserl changed his opinion. Frege states that the origin or the reference of the number zero is to zero (not to the multiplicity of things). For Husserl the zero is like a categorial intuition that is not fulfilled (like Being in *The Sixth Investigation of Logical Investigations*¹²⁵), but is based on non-presence. Derrida reminds us in his Frege analysis that Frege's language is in the logic of psychologism, which was a strong movement in German philosophy at the end of the 19th century. Derrida claims that for Husserl numbers are a posteriori and for Frege they are a priori.¹²⁶ Phenomenology can then create the theory of numbers in an a priori-synthetical way. This also implies a concept of time in which the empirical foundation of time is unproblematic. For Husserl, time is psychologically present and, as Herbart thinks, necessary to the concept of number.¹²⁷ Derrida therefore underlines that number is not a concept for Husserl as it is for Frege. In Fregean language number is an object and it can be

¹²⁴ For a brief survey see Dastur 1995, 19–41. See also Edmund Husserl, *Collected Works V, Early Writings in the Philosophy of Logic and Mathematics*. (Dordrecht: Kluwer 1994)

¹²⁵ See § 40–52 of LU II, VI. (Hua XIX,2, The Hague: Nijhoff 1984)

¹²⁶ P 65–73.

¹²⁷ P 62.

defined in purely logical terms, not as a psychic origin or a negation. For Frege a number falls under a certain concept (or a set).¹²⁸

4.1. Frege and Husserl, on Sense and Reference, Once More

In the history of philosophy Frege can be seen as one of the Kantian logicians who were interested in the problem that being, as Kant said, is not a predicate.¹²⁹ Frege had a set-theory and an anti-intentional theory of reference. We will not go into the details of the Husserl/Frege relationship, but simply note this again because one of the main arguments against deconstruction – or Saussurean structuralism – is that they failed to distinguish between sense and reference. If there is no correspondence between sense and reference, so the argument runs, the post-modernistic conclusion is that there is no fixed meaning and therefore no meaning at all. Besides, being an oversimplification of Husserl's theory of meaning, this argument is also false.¹³⁰ In *La voix* Derrida starts from Husserl's theory of significance, saying that it is more complex than Frege's because it involves the subject and its constitution and not the logical form of the proposition.¹³¹ In the Fregean way meaning always determines

¹²⁸ See for example Gottlob Frege, *The Basic Laws of Arithmetic. Exposition of the System*. Trans. Montgomery Furth. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 1966.

¹²⁹ For the relation between Frege and Kant, see Leila Haaparanta, *Frege's Doctrine of Being*. Helsinki: Acta Philosophica Fennica 1985, 27–46. See also P 46–77 on the same subject.

¹³⁰ One, but a more complex version (a Sokolowskian?) of this is Alan White's "Reconstructing Husserl: A critical response to Derrida's *Speech and Phenomena*". *Husserl Studies* 4, 1987. "The Derridian text does not present it clearly, in part because Derrida does not consistently recognize that Husserl distinguishes between a locutions meaning and its object in the first place. Frege makes the distinction, referring to the object of locutions, *Bedeutung*, the meaning, as its *Sinn*." (1987, 51)

¹³¹ VP 18–21/SP 18–20. See also "Form and Meaning", SP 114: "Not that Husserl now accepts the distinction proposed by Frege, which he had contested in the *Investigations*; he simply finds it convenient to reserve the *bedeuten-bedeutung* ("to mean", "meaning") terms for the order of expressive meaning." Husserl himself in *Logical Investigations* (Hua XIX, 2,

reference, *Sinn* predominates always over (*über*) *Bedeutung*, as Hintikka shows.¹³² Fregean semantics are extensional and Husserl is conceived as holding an intensional theoretical position to that extent that an object does not necessarily need a reference.¹³³ This involves the famous neutralisation, a term derived from Lotze's theory of logic.¹³⁴ For Husserl, the point of departure is impossible objects, like a Meinongian golden mountain. This is developed further in Derrida's *La voix* as the question of meaninglessness as a meaningful citation.¹³⁵

The peculiar interpretation is about the concept of a noema; for example, Rudolf Bernet notes in his *Husserls Begriff des Noema*¹³⁶ that noema as the content of consciousness is very problematic, especially in the light of *Hua XXIV* and *Hua XXVI*. Bernet asks whether we can reduce noema to a *Gegenstand*, if a noema is a givenness (*gegebenheit*)? The answer is no.¹³⁷ And for Husserl the noema is a question of knowledge and not of the ontical sphere – there is no ontical phenomenology.¹³⁸ Since noema is also a part of

58–63) refers to Frege's "Über Sinn und Bedeutung" *Zeitschrift f. Philos. u. philos. Kritik*, 100. Band, S. 25.

¹³² Jaakko Hintikka, *Intentions of Intentionality and other New Models for Modalities* (Dordrecht: Reidel 1975.) The Hintikkian doctrine about Husserl is formulated in Chapter 10–11 (1975, 192–249). For a Hintikkian commentary for Frege and Husserl, see Haaparanta 1985, 62ff. and for a recent work on this subject see Leila Haaparanta (ed.) *Mind, Meaning and Mathematics* (Dordrecht: Kluwer 1994).

¹³³ Smith and McIntyre, *Husserl and Intentionality* (Dordrecht: Reidel 1982), 178. The discussion about Frege's theory of reference is at 64–65 and compared to Husserl's theory at 176–182.

¹³⁴ See Dastur 1991, 23 where she refers to R.H. Lotze, *Logik. Drittes Buch. Vom Erkennen*, (Hamburg: Meiner, 1989) 504.

¹³⁵ VP 79–82/SP 71–74. I refer here to the theory of iterability that is fully developed in Derrida's *Limited Inc* (Northevanston 1979).

¹³⁶ "Husserls Begriff des Noema" in *Husserl-Ausgabe und Husserl Forschung*. Herausgegeben von Samuel Isseling. Dordrecht: Kluwer 1990. It was later published as "Le concept de noème" in Bernet 1994, 65–92.

¹³⁷ Bernet 1990, 67–69.

¹³⁸ *Hua XXIV*, 405–412 (Beilage IIIa: *Die Forschungsrichtung auf die Phänomene. Die Phänomenologie als absolut, nicht objektivierende Wissenschaft*)

the *Bedeutungslehre* as a signification it is highly questionable.¹³⁹ First there is a cut-off of the temporal aspects of constitution if there is noema as content; secondly as a signification there must be transcendental constitution. The Gurwitschian (psychological) approach, against the Føllesdalian approach (epistemic-referential) is not correct (or any current contrary positions).¹⁴⁰ This does not mean that the conflict between psychologism or antipsychologism is not valid, but that the concept of noema should perhaps not be developed as Husserl's last word about significance. The question of psychologism should be asked – as Husserl himself expounds phenomenological psychology – from phenomenology, but questions about noema and its relation to Frege seem not to be so fruitful; in fact it seems to be more of an *impasse*. One could try to find analogies for the similarities between Derrida and Frege, as Marianne Hobson does, but her interpretation depends on the reliability of the Dummettian interpretation of Frege's theory of language.¹⁴¹ In general, one should not imagine that an artificial language is not a metaphysical concept in "a Boederian Topology of Reason" or that it could as pluridimensional notation (one-and-half or second degree logic developed from the work of Frege) have the same function as *écriture*, without putting the concept of function in parenthesis.

4.2. The Refutation of Psychologism

As a consequence of the Frege correspondence, Husserl now takes a strong anti-psychologistic position on the question of the status of psychology in logic. What has been called *Psychologismusstreit* was widely noticed as a central problem in German philosophy at the

is the reference of Bernet 1990.

¹³⁹ Hua XXVI, cf. Bernet 1990, 72–73.

¹⁴⁰ I mean also J.N. Mohanty, *Husserl and Frege* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1982) and *The Possibility of Transcendental Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Kluwer 1985) and Smith/McIntyre (1982). Sokolowski is also often mentioned here.

¹⁴¹ Hobson 1998, 89–93.

turn of the last century.¹⁴² Husserl starts to insist on the idea of the pure logic and later the idea of pure phenomenology. Derrida, too, concentrates on this issue and on those parts of the first volume of *Logical Investigations* in which Husserl refuted psychologism.¹⁴³ It was important because that also led to "the empirical consequences of refutation of psychologism" in the fourth chapter. The laws of logic must not be psychological. For example, in § 22 of *LU I*, Husserl compares the laws of thought to the laws of Nature. He claims the laws of nature as well as the laws of thought (they are *Geistig*) are produced by humans. He means of course intentionality, but Derrida is more interested in the mode of producing and how the empirical genesis is refuted.¹⁴⁴ Empiricism has three problems: 1) The empirical laws of logic (in contradistinction to primary and secondary qualities) are not powerful enough to establish logic. 2) The laws of nature and thought must be separated: numbers are infinite (in a Platonic sense) but the laws of nature are constructed. The pregnant objection is that in psychological genesis there is something hyperpsychological or hyperempiristic (*überempiristisch*). The laws of psychology are stronger than psychology – the foundation of psychology (as regional ontology) is always outside itself. These laws can only be formal, but not exact (as in mathematics). 3) The third objection is that law has its own origin that should be determined in experience (the possibility of an experience distinguished from the content of an experience). Derrida also refers to the refutation of the psychological interpretation of logical propositions.¹⁴⁵ There is the question of laws and the force of lawfulness – the problem is about the Husserlian economy of thought (*Denkökono-*

¹⁴² I thank Risto Vilkkio for referring to two articles by Martin Kusch about the question of psychologism in German philosophy. See Martin Kusch, "The Sociological Deconstruction of Philosophical Facts – The case of 'psychologism.'" *Science Studies* 4 (2), 1991. Finnish Society for Science Studies, Vammala; "The Criticism of Husserl's Arguments Against Psychologism in German Philosophy 1901–1920", in Haaparanta (1994).

¹⁴³ *LU III* §§ 17–20, *IV* §§ 21–24 (*Hua XVIII*), P 83–99.

¹⁴⁴ This point is famous for refuting psychological logic: Husserl names at least Sigwart, Wundt and Lipp.

¹⁴⁵ *LU I*, *IX* §§ 52–56, P 94–101.

mie), which should provide only the most simple and elementary rules. In this case they could not be produced empirically. It seems that Derrida relies on Husserl's results in the refutation of empiricism in getting to the most elementary, i.e. to the law of *différance*.

Derrida also mentions that Husserl takes Kant's (or neo-kantianism's) train of thought in saying that the forms of thought are ideal and simple. Then there is the famous reference to Leibnitz, who conceived the *mathesis universalis* or universal grammar. Derrida sees this as teleology, because for Husserl these laws are chiasmatic, *hysteron proteron*: we must suppose them as first and in Derridean terms the becoming (or "progressing") of the logic is determined by a teleology. Therefore Husserl must represent the constitution of the basic laws as a possibility so that the basic law and absoluteness of the law (*Grundgesetzlichkeit*) is the same for all law. This remains the very idea of pure logic.

5. What Remains Concerning Husserl?

Since Derrida's interpretations of Husserl, which were finished about thirty years ago¹⁴⁶ there has been a continuing critique of Derrida. There is no need to elaborate it here; let me simply say that there have been three major arguments. The first one is based on a standard interpretation of Fregean semantics and on the comparison between *Logical Investigations* and *La voix*, which we have already explored. But even Jürgen Habermas basically relies on this account when he states that Derrida confuses the distinction between Fregean *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*: if there is no fixed reference there could be no reference at all; or, if there is no strict boundary between philosophy and literature, Derrida confuses them for the same

¹⁴⁶ *Form and Meaning* was the last article concerned with Husserl (SP 109–128). It was published as *La forme et le vouloir-dire* in *Revue internationale de philosophie*, 1967/3, no. 81 and then later in *Marges* (Derrida 1972). This does not mean, however, that Derrida has stopped writing about Husserl. But I find it very implausible to say that Derrida always repeats his deconstruction of Husserl as a philosophy of presence.

reason, the absence of the referent.¹⁴⁷ Secondly there has been criticism by certain American scholars of Husserl who say that because Derrida did not know certain manuscripts of Husserl, he was wrong in ascribing the strong theory of presence to Husserl.¹⁴⁸ The further claim from this is that Derrida did not even bother to read Husserl.¹⁴⁹

The third argument, which I intend to deal with in this chapter discusses the nature of phenomenology itself. There Derrida is even described as a phenomenologist; likewise, Rudolf Bernet says that *La voix* is also an introduction to Derrida's phenomenology of signs. Bernet agrees that Derrida is right about Husserl in general, but at the same time he opposes Derrida in a certain sense, for example on the question about the notion of the subject.¹⁵⁰

It could be claimed that Derrida underestimates the importance of Husserl's theory of intersubjectivity, as everybody else did before the publication of his *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität* in three volumes. This could likewise be said about the second volume of *Krisis*.¹⁵¹ It can be even shown, as Karl Schumann did, that Husserl had a theory about community and the state.¹⁵² The claim that Husserl's phenomenology is solipsistic and that he failed to comprehend any theory of intersubjectivity is simply wrong. The crucial question is to know whether recent interpretations of Husserlian intersubjectivity will prove that the Derridean interpretation of phenomenology does an injustice to Husserl.

The answer seems to be that the meaning of phenomenology is

¹⁴⁷ See Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press 1987), 167–181.

¹⁴⁸ See Schwab 1986. This repeats the argument that nobody ever has supported so strong a theory of presence as that which Derrida attacks – but it begs the question because it presupposes that the critique of the presence is the central thesis in Derrida's philosophy.

¹⁴⁹ See Evans 1991.

¹⁵⁰ Bernet 1994, 2; 268ff.

¹⁵¹ Hua XXVIII.

¹⁵² Schumann 1988, 56–81. Husserl's theory as a teleology leads to the famous phenomenological *Liebesgemeinschaft*.

tied to the problem of intersubjectivity.¹⁵³ For Husserl, the other is constituted by the ego: the question of what the “zero-point” for constitution is – if we are positing the other before “me”, is whether are we simply moving from the abstract to the concrete. Original cohabitation is posited as passive and at the pre-predicative level of consciousness. Even if there is no representative structure for the other, but the other is the content of the primordial experience – not mention of pure experience – it remains unclear that there must be a transcendental field of the subject except for structural, i.e. static reasons. The problem of intersubjectivity then begins to touch the nature of phenomenology – if transcendental intersubjectivity has the same role as *Dasein* (as Steinbock and Zahavi seem to say) would the role of the phenomenological method change? If the phenomenological inquiry in itself is a genetic procedure and not a static one (eidetic), must we suppose something else, like a generative phenomenology, as Anthony J. Steinbock claims in his *Home and Beyond: Generative Phenomenology after Husserl* (1995). Could generative phenomenology then be an answer to Derrida?¹⁵⁴ Even if generativity is an important notion, one should be careful with the notion of progress in phenomenology. Since generativity is the ground for progressivity, one must also ask about the retrogressive mode of generativity.

I admit that there are certain limits to phenomenology and that the new intersubjectivistic phenomenology is in trouble with them. Steinbock refers to Derrida's *Genesis and Structure*, where Derrida maintains that the structural opening of a genesis is still static

¹⁵³ It seems also that Derrida's interpretation of Husserl has also influenced younger generations in French phenomenology, in its emphasis on the problem of intersubjectivity as well.

¹⁵⁴ Steinbock states this more clearly in “The Origins and Crisis of Continental Philosophy” (*Man and World* 30, 1997, 199–217). He says that Derrida remains at a poor, genetic level of continental philosophy and he gives examples of good generative philosophy such as the “Levinasian notion of Infinity, Marion's God and Scheler's Holy.” (214) Steinbock particularly attacks Derrida's “Cogito and the History of Madness” in *WD* and accuses him of understanding the concept of decision (as a temporal origin) between reason and madness as static (206–207).

phenomenology without going into deeper genetic analysis. Steinbock says that in the "Derridean spirit" we can say that static structures really are surpassed by deeper genetic analyses when there is a movement from static to generative phenomenology and vice versa.¹⁵⁵ One can reply to this with the problems of birth and death: these are excluded from "static and generative phenomenology". According to Steinbock, the Cartesian phenomenological ego has no ancestors¹⁵⁶ and he cites unpublished manuscripts extensively to support this view.¹⁵⁷ This is also the mode of transcendental phenomenological archaeology. Steinbock says:

That is, he [Husserl] grapples with the constitutive features of sleep, birth, and death within the confines of a *genetic* phenomenology. Unlike sleep, birth and death cannot yet be investigated as essential features in the constitution of the world because they signal for a genetic phenomenology a decisive break with the concordance of world constitution. It can only treat "inhibitions" such as sleep or fainting because they figure as phases within a concordant life or within a synchronic intersubjective temporal segment. Since a genetic analysis begins and ends with the individual or a contemporaneous community – in either passive or active synthesis – birth and death escape the parameters of a genetic transcendental phenomenology.¹⁵⁸

On the other hand, in generative phenomenology, an ego could have relatives and ancestors beyond its individuality;¹⁵⁹ "birth and death are now figured into intersubjective and world constitution".¹⁶⁰ If so, what would it then mean that the possibility of my death (or my absence) constitutes the structural possibility of my presence (a static structure) but that in the generative phenomenology my death is

¹⁵⁵ Steinbock 1995, 265. See P 161–162.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 189–191.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 190. See also *Hua* XV, 171–172: "Beilage VIII. Problem – Generativität – Geburt und Tod als Wesensvorkommnisse für die Weltkonstitution."

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 193.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 191.

also a possibility in world constitutions.¹⁶¹ This account of finitude also means a levelling between constitutions – primordial ego precedes the other or death because Husserl introduces the ego as apodeictical. Even if we say that the ego is constructed like “a *Dasein*” on the anthropological level, a more profound analogy of Heideggerian thinking of the transcendental level concerning the attitude towards death is available. The forgetting of birth and death occurs first at the level of natural attitude and the transcendental reduction gives us the proper meaning of death. There the transcendental ego could construct birth and death at the level of transcendental intersubjectivity, i.e. after my so-called “second birth as an transcendental ego”, after the “second childhood”. This means that origin, birth, is forgotten unless we do not constitute co-existence.¹⁶² Intersubjectivity is tied to the problem of the death of the other.

Therefore it seems that transcendental and apodeictic phenomenology structurally evades the problem of death. This is tied to the notion of evidence. The problem of the ego’s self-evidence is tied to its presence since an apodeictical ego is always a living ego. For Husserl others are constituted by an ego in general. The other for Husserl is an original possibility as Derrida notes in *Violence and Metaphysics* when he discusses the difference between Husserl and Levinas. For Derrida it is also a problem of language when we speak about the other; in fact it is the other to whom and not about whom

¹⁶¹ J.R. Mensch, *Intersubjectivity and transcendental idealism* (New York: SUNY Press 1988) seems to be one of the first to recognise the problems of Others and death in the constitution of intersubjectivity (1988, 156–158; 258–260). “Thus, with regard to my sense of birth and death, Husserl notes that these are not personally experienced phenomena. [...] This sense can be constituted only by my drawing of analogy between the organic birth and death of Others and the fact that I myself am an embodied subject.” (158–159). Mensch also translates from the famous Manuscript A VI, 14 of 1930: “[M]y death as worldly phenomenon can only be constituted for me when I experience the death of Others...The death of Others is the death that is constituted prior to this. Just so in the case of the birth of Others”. (158)

¹⁶² See Mensch 1988, 156–171. He cites Husserl at 162 who says “[...] finitude is concealed so long as my birth has not been discovered, so long as I have not brought into play the co-being [*Mitsein*] of the Others.” Ms. C 17 II, p. 7, ca. Jan 1931.

one speaks.

He [Husserl] is concerned with the describing how the other *as other*, in its irreducible alterity, is presented to me. Is presented to me, as we will see later, as originary nonpresence. It is the other as other which is the ego's phenomenon: the phenomenon of a certain non-phenomenality which is irreducible for the ego as ego in general (the *eidos* ego). For it is impossible to encounter the alter ego (in the very form of encounter described by Levinas), impossible to respect it in experience and in language, if this other, in its alterity, does not *appear* for an ego (in general). One could neither speak, nor have any sense of the totally other, if there was not a phenomenon of the totally other, or evidence of the totally other as such. No one more than Husserl has been sensitive to the singular and irreducible style of this evidence, and to the original non-phenomenalization indicated within it. Even if one neither seeks nor is able to thematize the other *of which* one does not speak, but *to whom* one speaks, this impossibility and this imperative themselves can be thematized (as Levinas does) only on the basis of a certain appearance of the other as other for an ego. Husserl speaks of this *system*, of this appearance, and of the impossibility of thematizing the other in a person.¹⁶³

In a footnote Derrida raises the opposition of constitution (*Leistung*) and an encounter with Levinas and Sartre who would probably say that one does not constitute but encounters the other. Derrida says that constitution creates or invents nothing,¹⁶⁴ the constitution for the other means that, as Derrida bluntly puts it:

The *Cartesian Meditations* often emphasize that in *fact*, *really*, nothing precedes the experience of the Others.¹⁶⁵

The originary presence, the quest for origin, is constituted by a trace of the other, i.e. there is no pure self-presence, or the possibility of self-presencing – as a possibility of horizon – without constitution by the experience of the other. Derrida's attitude to the notion of the other suggests that what the other could be is not yet, if ever, to be

¹⁶³ ED 180–181/WD 123.

¹⁶⁴ See Römpp (1992, 39–45) about the “experience of the others” that is constituted (or produced) in some horizon of possibility.

¹⁶⁵ ED 181, footnote 1./WD 315–316, endnote 44 to WD 123.

determined, because this would be also a decision about where the other or the otherness is.

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